

SCIENCE, LIFE AND LITERATURE

THE WORKS OF M. P. SHIEL

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1895 <i>Prince Zaleski</i> | 1919 <i>The Hungarian Revolution</i>
(translation from the
German of C H
Schmitt) |
| 1896 <i>The Rajah's Sapphire</i> (with
W. T. Stead) | |
| 1896 <i>Shapes in the Fire</i> | 1923 <i>The Children of the Wind</i> |
| 1898 <i>The Yellow Danger</i> | 1927 <i>How the Old Woman Got
Home</i> |
| 1899 <i>Contraband of War</i> | |
| 1899 <i>Cold Steel</i> | 1928 <i>Here Comes the Lady</i> |
| 1900 <i>The Man-Stealers</i> | 1929 <i>About Myself</i> |
| 1901 <i>The Lord of the Sea</i> | 1929 <i>Dr Krasinski's Secret</i> |
| 1901 <i>The Purple Cloud</i> | 1930 <i>The Black Box</i> |
| 1902 <i>The Weird O' It</i> | 1933 <i>Say Au R'Vour but not
Goodbye</i> |
| 1903 <i>Unto the Thurd Generation</i> | |
| 1904 <i>The Evil that Men Do</i> | 1933 <i>This Above All</i> (1943
<i>Above All Else</i>) |
| 1905 <i>The Lost Viol</i> | |
| 1905 <i>The Yellow Wave</i> | 1935 <i>The Invisible Voices</i> (with
John Gawsworth) |
| 1906 <i>The Last Miracle</i> | |
| 1908 <i>The White Wedding</i> | 1936 <i>Poems</i> (ed. John Gaws-
worth) |
| 1909 <i>The Isle of Lies</i> | |
| 1909 <i>This Knot of Life</i> | 1937 <i>The Young Men are
Coming</i> |
| 1911 <i>The Pale Ape</i> | |
| 1913 <i>The Dragon</i> (1929 <i>The
Yellow Peril</i>) | 1948 <i>The Best Short Stories of
M. P. Shiel</i> (ed John
Gawsworth) |

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

- 1932 *M P Shiel* (in *Ten Contemporaries*) by John Gawsworth
 1948 *The Works of M P Shiel* by A Reynolds Morse

SCIENCE, LIFE AND LITERATURE

by
M. P. SHIEL

With a Foreword by
JOHN GAWSWORTH



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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Foreword <i>by John Gausworth</i>	7
I. Of Myself	15
II. On Reading	28
III. Of Writing	58
IV. On Scholar Artistry	95
V. Of Writing and Science	101
VI. On Happy Endings	117
VII. Of How to be Happy	122
VIII. On Wealth	133
IX. Of The Necessity of War ⁴	137
X. On The Cause of War	159
XI. Of Religion and Irreligion	164
XII. On Tolerance	171
XIII. Of Vengeance	179
XIV. On Eternal and Temporal	183
XV. Of Time Travelling	191

	PAGE
XVI. On Panic	196
XVII. Of The Persistence of Personality After Death	200
XVIII. On A Mood of the Future	206
Note on the Texts	215

FOREWORD

I

IN JULY 1931 a nineteen-year-old publisher's clerk, imbued with fanatic literary enthusiasm, wrote a letter of appreciation to an entire stranger, a novelist entering his sixty-seventh year, living alone in a bungalow hermitage off a Sussex highroad, and received an immediate reply

The lad had issued his first pamphlet of verses a few weeks before; his idol had published twenty-five volumes of prose-fiction, volumes frequently rifted with the ore of high prose-poetry, and had spent some forty years in raising his craft to his vision of art; yet, from the abounding generosity of his nature, the novelist wrote to the young man as to an equal. That letter was the cornerstone of a collaboration which was to last for sixteen years, a collaboration the survivor, without morbidity, feels continues still.

There were many literary plans deliberated at "L'Abri"—two miles south of Horsham—in the ten years following the first encounter of this oddly differing pair, drawn personally together after meeting, in all probability, by that greatest of magnets, the attraction of opposites

The novelist preached Science and professed pure Socialist principles, referring often to the pronouncements he had early delivered in his *The Lord of the Sea*, as he lit his foot-long pipe with a spill from his crumpled, thumbed *Daily Herald*. The youth, "beginning poet", was staunchly traditionalist, and frenetically furious for "Form in Art". And yet M. P. Shiel and John Gawsworth—and quite unreasonably—were in human accord, in such accord, indeed, that within a year the former supplied an essay to preface his bibliography by the latter, who by then had completed his collection of Shiel "first editions".

Soon other schemes were set afoot after discussion by Shiel's blue-velvet-flounced fireside, and card-board boxes stored all over "L'Abri"—behind the coal-box, under beds, tucked into bookshelf corners—gave up their half-dead, a recovered Belsen of the novelist's manuscripts which only needed reviving by their author's rereading, and the transfusion of his fresh revisions. There were essays, poems, stories, unfinished stories, and plays; and there were some half-dozen already-published noble novels that attention and a fountain-pen's consistent annotation might rehabilitate to the degree of entering the "new edition" lists with flaunting pennants¹

In 1935 the stories saw print in *The Invisible Voices*,

¹ On his death, in February 1947, Shiel left completely revised texts, for reissue, of six of his favourite books *Prince Zaleski*, *The Yellow Danger*, *Contraband of War*, *The Weird O' It*, *The Isle of Lies*, and *The Black Box*

and the year later the verse as *Poems*. Of the considerable new works there remained this volume, together with the collecting of the unfinished stories, *Seven Limbs of Satan* (stories completed by myself, approved by their originator, and severally anthologised as Shiel-Gawsworth collaborations), and the still unpublished *Five Plays*.

Lost pieces in every *genre* being recalled to Shiel's mind, search in the British Museum, both in Bloomsbury and Colindale, recovered them, and, restyled, they were returned to the crucible of their source for transmutation. Indeed "L'Abri" became something of a factory, and its Socialist uncomplainingly worked overtime.¹ If the Master's patience was taxed by his young friend, it never faltered. If the poet blushes now for youthful importunities, his hand on his heart, he will not excuse himself for them.

II

The origins of any book of quality must always hold an interest for the scholar and for the admirer of the author. I have mentioned above the five piles of manuscript and the shorter pile of selected books I mounted on the Prussian-blue carpet before Shiel's serge-clad knees one afternoon in the late spring of 1934 after ransacking his house, and have informed

¹In these years, it should be remembered, Shiel also produced *Say Au R'Voir but not Goodbye* (1933), *This Above All* (1933), *The Young Men are Coming* (1937), *The Splendid Devil* (in the Press), and his mountainous MS *Jesus*

that three of these piles, after his rigorous revision, saw print in his lifetime—the *Stories*, the *Poems*, and, in anthologies, the *Collaborated Stories*. But their publication was as chance dictated, not as Shiel willed.

To-day, reading again the correspondence that passed between us in those early years of our association, I am reminded of a fact the impact of the war years had almost banished from my mind, the fact that THIS book was the one which the author on that day wished to work upon first and to place before the public as soon as might be. And now, grown older, I think I sense his reason. Within many of his fictions Shiel had consciously sermonised—his father had been a powerful lay-preacher—but he had never (or only once, if accurate bibliography is respected¹) put forward his ideas as from his own mouth, only delivering them from the lips of his characters, as in "Premier and Maker", "Cummings Monk Defines Greatness of Mind", and in the stirring speech of Edward, Prince of Wales, in *The Dragon*. In these pieces he had coated his bolus of philosophy with the jam of fiction—I will here risk inviting the tyro-critic to designate this book as "Pills without Jam"—and he wished now, for once, to twist free of the cloak of fantasy.

But to revert to established facts. The documents before me reveal that in June 1934 I compiled the first draft of this book for its author's attention, and that in the March following he was ready to receive

¹ In *On Reading*, prefaced to *This Knot of Life*, 1909.

it in typescript for total revision. I quote some relevant lines from his letters of the period.

1935, March 12th: "Essay lot to hand "

March 20th: "Am getting on with essays."

March 28th: "I am seeing to all things bidden.

Some of the typing is much too faint, so I am getting retyped. I might like to include 'Monk Defines Greatness of Mind',¹ so will you lend your copy and send; I shall not spoil, though I have spoiled the 'On Reading' book?² There is a fuller 'Monk on Greatness of Mind' than in the book;³ if you have, send."

April 12th: "The essays will be sent you as soon as my typist decides to send me."

May 2nd. "The typist girl (or old woman now) hasn't yet sent the essays—will soon, no doubt. Then I'll send."

May 10th: "I have just got from the typist the essays, so now to read, and send you."

III

From these letter-extracts it may be seen that the best part of three months was expended by Shiel in

¹ The short version of this text appears in *The Pale Ape*, 1911

² *This Knot of Life*, 1909

³ This 182-page longer-version manuscript, which is still unpublished, I gave on May 21, 1937, to Sir Hugh Walpole for presentation to the Bodleian. It was sold at the sale of the Hugh Walpole Library at Christie's on July 2, 1945, and again at Hodgson's on January 12, 1948. It is now in the collection of Shiel's latest bibliographer, A. Reynolds Morse, Cleveland, Ohio—J G.

co-ordinating the draft to which he had somewhat injudiciously appended the two pieces he was later prevailed upon to omit, the already mentioned "Monk Defines Greatness of Mind", and the speech of Edward, Prince of Wales, from *The Dragon*. The manuscript at that date, as I recall, contained twelve essays, to which three further pieces, "On Scholarly Artistry", "On Panic" and "Of Vengeance", upon their exhumation, were added shortly afterwards.

Books, like fruit, may dally and await ripeness. One will drop into waiting, receptive hands, and another and another, and a fourth tarry a little longer, mellow, and refuse all supplications till the awaiting palms seem trustworthy.

In some ways this book is comparable with such a sturdy lingerer. In July 1935 a publisher hesitated, suggesting the omission of certain opinions, the same publisher who in 1937 published Shiel's penultimate novel and in 1947 invited first refusal of Shiel's biography. In 1936 the manuscript lay lazily in my cupboard. In 1937 a sample page was set up by another publisher, who had already published six Shiel volumes, but a change in the firm's ownership halted negotiations to the extent that not until February 1941 did the author receive the return of his manuscript from the new proprietors, harassed by wartime publishing difficulties: "Far-off things and battles long ago"!

In the spring of 1946 I returned from Bengal. On May 25th, Shiel and I lit our pipes and lounged

together again before "L'Abri's" faithful fire. The blue flounces had grown more dusty, the carpet more threadbare in my five years' absence in the R.A.F., but the Shiel I knew and loved was still there, still twinkling of eye, still indomitable. Of a sudden he rose from his arm-chair and plunged his hand down behind the coal-box, to that cache I had known so long and so well. He drew out this book, and placed it again in my hands. He had "tinkered with it often", he said, and there were three more pieces to consider as additions. "Of Time-Travelling", "Of the Persistence of Personality after Death", and "On a Mood of the Future", he had been saving them against my return. This was the book that he envisaged would pave the way for his life-work, his unorthodox and controversial *Jesus*; let it be published as his John the Baptist pronouncements, fore-running his last, and most formidable work.

With this book in manuscript under arm, as dusk descended on the wildness of garden that had given my old friend so much joy, I clasped Shiel's hand: it was the last time.

JOHN GAWSWORTH

I OF MYSELF

I

I NAME myself a native of the West Indies, whither I was transported to commence to draw breath—to Montserrat, a mountain-mass, loveliest of the lovely, but touchy! uncertain! dashing into tantrums—hurricanes, earthquakes, brooks bubbling-hot, “sou-frières” (sulphur-swamps), floods—“fit nurse to a poetic child”, and I have seen “unspeakable things, not possible for a man to utter”.

My father was a “local preacher” (Methodist), little imagining how far his only son, born after eight daughters, and bred a Nazarite, would be from preaching in chapels, though vastly more religious than he, since with increasing speed now we are “better than our fathers”. Not so much a poet as he, however, for, if one had told him “You are a poet”, he would have said “Nonsense”, whereas I have found out that I am a poet, in the hour that I found out becoming less profoundly a poet, in such a case “the unconscious being the alone complete: know *not* thyself”. But when there was storm abroad, and cosmic voices of wanderers calling all aloft, and all

cowered awe-struck, and the bounds of Being were swallowed up in bleakness, then was his night of the ball and high Sinai interview, he, blown all aflaut like Lear, going in a flowing gown up and down the house, hailing those howlers' haste, egging on the hurricane's crew to yet graver hurries, and the uproarious to yet more tremendous terrorisms—"blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!"—while we others sat mouse-quiet, and had our hand on our mouth. Anyway, owing to that religiosity of his, each morning for years he and I on a little sofa read together a chapter of the Bible, and from thus knowing the book by heart arises perhaps that I write as I do, I myself being a preacher at eleven, preaching in a nightdress over my clothes of Jonah in the whale's belly, shouting, "Lazarus, come forth!", and Lazarus came; but no sooner was I fourteen than I began to name the Methodists "the Methodies", making sad a man.

He had also the Irish foible of thinking highly of people descended from kings, and *had*, in truth, about him some species of kingship, aloofness, was called by all "the Governor", and on my fifteenth birthday, July 21st, 1880, had me crowned King of Redonda—a day of carousal, of a meeting of ships (he was a shipowner), and of people, to see the palm of the Rev. Dr. Semper, of Antigua, daub me with the balm of anointment; and this notion that I am somehow the King, King of kings, and the Kaiser of imperial Caesar, was so inveterately suggested to me, that I

became incapable of expelling it. But to believe fantasies is what causes half our sorrows, as not believing realities causes half, and it would have been better for me if my people had been more reasonable here; nor can I forgive myself now for the solemnity and dignity with which I figured in that show. For what is a king without subjects? Certainly, if I am a king, my kingdom is "not of this world": Redonda is a rock-island of scarcely nine square miles, and my subjects were troops innumerable of boobies deciding to swoop with sudden steepness into the sea like streams of meteors streaming, together with eleven poor men who gathered the boobies' excrement to make "guano" (manure). And these were *American* people! Moreover, not long after my coronation the British Government, apprehensive that America might "annex" the rock, "annexed" it itself, i.e., stuck a little flagstaff on it; and though my parent irked heaven and earth with his claim of "priority", there the flagstaff remains, if it has not gone to heaven on some gale's gallop: there may it ever remain. I have scaled to that rock's very top, and looked abroad at blue-eyed Beauty, being ever nimble on my feet, given to feats of climbing, running, rope-walking, dancing, acrobatics, and once at thirteen jumped without hurt from a first-floor window (higher than ours): for I had told a tutor that, if ever he ventured to touch me, I should jump; and he touched me, and I jumped—to his everlasting heart-shock. Conjuring tricks also attracted me, as still I cherish a reverence

for the conjuror, the acrobat—intellectual or physical—knowing that “by wit He seated the earth, He fastened the Heavens with trickiness”. Once when a troupe came, I saw a conjuror break eggs into a hat, put on the hat, take it off, and now round his brow was a row of roses. So the next day I, entranced—I was eleven—said to Paddy—lad of twenty, wedded to me—“I can do it!” He denied; I insisted, “Paddy, I can.” Now, he was a mulatto—a sort of people as credulous as priests are, for whom fancies have the same weight as ascertained facts—and, shaken in his faith in Nature by my faith in myself, he said, “Well, we’ll see.” So he gets eggs, breaks them into a hat; and I can see again his keen stoop, his stare of interest, as I raised the hat toward my head, and can hear again his glad outcry of laughter, as the universe rallied to re-establish his old view of her, while I stood foolish, with the fluids raining down my face. . . . But how ill-educated for eleven! how foreign to the cosmos! I had been reading Caesar, you see, the prick of my intellect “let down” (as we say when we soften steel) for ever. Then, after my window-jump, to Harrison College in Barbados—a good school, as schools go; but I do not seem to have had any more scepticism than my teachers—any more perception that the two hours a week of chemistry and the four of Greek was a crazy state of things. To-day I am in the ironic situation of “knowing” six or seven languages (“Interpreter to the International Congress of Hygiene and Demography”), while being fiercely at war with that

sort of "knowledge", the acquisition of which is a lazy labour, occupying the brain with the hobby and habit of remembering, until, pampered, it shrinks from the ice and pioneer's pick of thinking. Then after my coronation I was translated to King's College, London: now matriculation and "intermediate"; about the time of my degree my father dying, and during all that alumnus-period I seem to have quite abandoned writing English, though at twelve I had written a novel, the MS. of which was long preserved in my family (never published); at thirteen I was issuing a penny-periodical, seven copies a week for seven "subscribers", written *by hand*—a labour of Hercules; and at fifteen I had a serial in a newspaper. But then I was hypnotised into being interested in writing Latin asclepiads, Greek sapphics—grotesque thing! irrelevant thing!—changing into a Chinese mind a European stripling. But when I had taught for a year what was called "mathematics" in a Derbyshire school, I thought of following my namesake James *Phupps* Shiel, and becoming a doctor (great-grandfather—he who said of some field "Not mine? It is mine from heaven's height right down to hell!", the wild mind); this thought kept me at St. Bart's six months, whereupon, coming directly, every day, in contact with science, I was done with writing—or reading!—Greek poetry, except the old Homer, whom one may easily get addicted to. But the very first operation which I saw was for strabismus—on the eyeball—and this so sickened and hypnotised me into a dislike for knifing,

that I gave it up; and, lying idle one day, gazing at the sky, was given the idea to write my *Prince Zaleski*. At seventeen I had come across Poe just when I had begun to smoke, and the two smokes transported me to Nephelococugia, where I sojourned many days, so that this *Prince Zaleski* (published in Lane's famous "Keynote Series") has in it more Poe than Job. Then, on writing more, I decided that writing English—my first love—was what was given me to do. I soon had no lack of interests. Through Sir Ernest Clark, of the Royal Agricultural Society, whom I had known, I was appointed interpreter to the Congress; through Sir William Robinson and my brother-in-law, the Honble. S. L. Horsford, I was brought into contact with Earl Gray and with Sir C. Alexander Harris, of the Colonial Office (later Governor of Newfoundland), through whom again I came into relation with Mrs. Gladstone, a very gracious lady, connected with the West Indies, who at that time took no little interest in my writing, and profoundly influenced my goings and comings; through this again W. T. Stead got to know me, conceived that I "had an imagination", and would write to me invitingly when one of his rapturous ideas in journalism attacked and urged him—he and I even writing a wild little "book" in collaboration; at the same time I was coaching my nephew, Cyril Horsford, now the butcher of "nose, ear, and throat" of 24 Harley Street; and simultaneously was in with Louis Tracy, with whom I wrote several "books" under a penname, he having "the

idea", I concocting "the plot", writing the first half, he the second—in a wildly different style! I can't think now with what motive I so wasted myself. Meantime, I was getting to know the literary people, like Dowson, Machen, Louÿs, Ella D'Arcy, George Egerton, Harland, Wilde, Stevenson, while the periodical people were getting to know me. When some trouble broke out in China, Keary, of Pearson's, for whom Tracy had written a very "successful" serial (*The Final War*), asked me to do a "warserial", which became my "successful" *Yellow Danger*, published by Grant Richards, then beginning, he, too: and he, with Werner Laurie, has been my publisher. Then serial after serial. I am summoned by Alfred Harmsworth, am tempted by that tempter to abandon Pearson, but won't, till, too much tempted, I write for *People*, *Chronicle*, *Leader*, *Red*, and the rest—easy labour by which one makes two or three thousand pounds a year; but then, to make real books of the serials, one must needs rewrite, and that is trying. In the thick of which my fate takes me one afternoon into the Palais de Glace in the rue de Madrid, where I see a girl of sixteen skating, a Parisian Spaniard. Of course, I had seen lovely girls—in Cuba—in Andalusia—in Martinique—but never before seen *a beauty*, and she resembled a girl whom I had loved at seven, another girl whom I had loved at thirteen, and my mother. Now, I had long ceased "to pray" like my parents, considering that improper; but that afternoon I dashed in a cab

to my chamber, and, prostrating myself, I prayed, "God! give her to me!" And the good God did. I did not know her name to begin, but out of the grasp and drag of some twenty I grabbed her, got her. It was natural, after this, for me to pray for girls; and I can say that, if ever I have prayed for a girl, I have got her from God. She—Lina—was the "Laura" of my *Cold Steel*—at least her face and manner; in the streets of London every creature turned the head to look back at her, and observe the handicraft of her Father. But she did not think London "pretty" ("Londres n'est pas jolie"), and it was thus that I got the habit of living long in Paris. However, she was not strong—died after five years, leaving me and a daughter; and it was some fifteen years before I married again, when I met at a lecture Lydia, who resembles Lina and my mother. Then the war—Censor's Office—toward the end Italy—privilege of kissing the Pope's great bit, his toe—and, meantime, no writing; but then commenced afresh, having something to say, as America especially seems to see

Meantime, I have a good time, "counting my days", having found out how to live in heaven's high health—never have a pain, or anything like that. Though no chick still, I run six miles a day—or rather a night, for I like the light of the other suns even better than ours. "My amusements" are mathematics, sometimes mountaineering. . . . But more than enough of my little self: which "*self*",

I know, is a fancy, has no reality, being a succession of little selves connected by a thread of memory, and only One is real: to know which thing is weal, I think.

II

It is not very consistent of me to have written books, since I can see that people read too much, through a certain laziness of mentation: as an American lady has lately written to me, "I read three books a week," and I to her, "I guarantee that that would undermine any mind, however strong: this, then, is why you 'go to confession', for the habit of leaning upon props will at last bring one to being a cripple." She, however, it appears (I never met her), reads all sorts of books—travel, semi-science—but some English ladies whom I know read novels and newspapers—little else. Now, the souls of these are lost: there is no saviour can save them; they are no more themselves, but are puddles of other souls that are themselves puddles. Newspapers! published daily! the hurried words of the tattler, having a circulation wider—far—than the words of the wise; and, as to novels—well, I must confess that I never had time to read many, but in those that I have got through I saw nothing novel, and what struck me was that there didn't seem to be enough *motive* for one to sit down and write that mass, so that I have asked myself, "Why ever didn't he (or she!) amuse himself by doing carpentry, or

conic sections, puzzles, tennis—something more educating and entertaining than this purposeless whirl of words?" If there is a desire to "represent life", and if there is a sense in the writer of some special gift to do this, that might be something; but, in general, life is little represented: people in real life, when they meet, talk on general subjects—the fall of the French Cabinet, the velocity of the nebulae, the decay of the Church, the conditions of flight in the stratosphere—but in the novel the people speak only of one another, of the plot in which they are involved; or, if by chance they discuss things in general, the conclusions to which they come aren't new enough, nor of moment enough, to produce the impression that here was the insight, here the discovery, that moved the writer to write, and it was worth the time he spent: so that when in a few years the writer fills shelves with empty books, the impression left is that his (her!) only motive was to earn a livelihood, and that he is a common workman, who works for himself and for another man, not for Man, not for a planet, not, so to say, for God. And since no one is quite unlike his environment, I, too, no doubt, am of this kind. Not wholly, though, I fancy—perhaps because my father had some money; so that when my old friend, Mr. Louis Tracy, C.B.E., has said to me, "Strange fellow, Shiel: you could make as much money as Bernard Shaw and Edgar Wallace put together, but you persist in casting your pearls before swineherds, who

know not pearls," I have answered something like this; "It is *you*, Tracy, who are strange, if you do not conceive that different people can be pleased by different things, that Mr. Shaw may have had a liking for oranges, and I a liking, not less genuine, for pineapple. And, if I made that money, whatever should I do with it? Should I by chance eat more? Not all the wealth of ten Ormuzes would induce me to put one ounce more food into my sweet little body that I treat with a ritual so deliberate, as an altar. Moreover, as to 'pearls' and 'swineherds', they aren't all swineherds; those that are will be changing their occupation—soon—getting to be fruit-growers. Haven't you noticed this new interest of boys in wireless mechanisms, model engines, and so on? I am expecting to live to see the kicking to the devil of headmasters of the parson-type, and nations of scientists arising. They won't be swineherds then, look And, if I don't live to see, I shan't be restless in my grave, but shall abide in quietness, having died knowing what I know." Hence I have considered no music too sweet, nor wit too deep, to put into the sort of narrative of events that I have evolved. It seems to be considered in England that the one named *The Purple Cloud* is my "best", but in America they think better of my *How the Old Woman Got Home*, which has run, is still running, into "editions", while I myself think best of one named *Children of the Wind*—or think best of the *memory* of the dream of it, for I shrink from

re-reading it, lest I should find it less rich in wit and singing than I anticipate, as once happened to me. But the *Old Woman* one has this distinction, that in it is given, so to say, my political system. I first demonstrate what "good" means—and anyone who makes quite sure of this little thing will be astonished at the flood of light which it will throw into his thoughts on all sorts of subjects. I demonstrate, then, that the noun "*Good*" means pleasure, that the adjective "good" means pleasant—and nothing else. Then I demonstrate that *all* pleasure, *all* good, is the result of truth, of science—the science of the amoeba or of Newton. Then I demonstrate that the growth of truth, of science, of pleasure, of Good, depends (1) upon brains (a little), and (2) upon luck (much). Then I demonstrate that, though the luck of a million is exactly a millionfold more than the luck of one, the million must be *in the way* of truth, seeking truth, or no luck can accrue—must be scientists, men of leisure; but this they can't be, if they are slaves, i.e., "landless men", men without a country: so that any great growth of Good depends upon countries being owned by nations.

III

And now I have to do with the young poet, John Gawsworth, a live wire, he, young! and live! who fumbles like the bee among my written things, and, knowing wondrously all that have been published,

if he comes upon aught unpublished, utters sound of discovery, as when H. G. Wells' men on the moon cried, "Life!", and those ten thousand cried, "The sea! the sea!" I never dreamt that I had written poems, but he has contrived to discover a surprising number, as to his dear industry is due the collection of these pieces that ensue, some of them cribbed out of other books, but some, he thinks, new.

II

ON READING¹

FIRST, why should one read? At present everybody does, some "the papers", some the prayer-book, or a novelette, I once even saw a periodical called *Something to Read*. But why this? Your reply, I think, will be, that in the throng of modern things there are periods of peace wherein one reads to "while away the time", but, even so, it is to be observed that this *relaxation* is most perfectly to be obtained in turning from work for pay to work for play, as City-folk from business to cricket, to being Territorials, and so forth.

For, really, this reading-mania of the nations has an origin deeper in nature than any desire to "while away the time", has an origin in the fact that *progress is the law of Life*, in the fact that the longer progress has gone on the greater has grown its rate, so that by the time it got to man its rate began to be great, and at modern man its rate is even eager. Nor is progress any more the law of Life in the gross than of the separate life, man or nag, though, because of its increasing speed, a modern man will do *any*

¹ Originally addressed as a Dedicatory Letter to a Mrs Meade of Kensington

thing, will be gnawing an end of straw, will be perusing football gossip, sooner than sprawl all torpid, while a horse, its girth once gorged with herbage, will long bulge dead-still with a lubberlip in his meadow-plot, bitterly meditating upon nothing. Progress, then—but let us linger one instant, so as to be definite within us as to what progress is. Progress in a mound of stones is a growth in the amount of stone; in a tide, a fire, a growth in the amount of tide, of fire; progress in Life is a growth in the amount of life: and we know when the amount of life is grown, when we are aware of a growth in what is the trait of Life—consciousness, or knowledge, or science: the trait of *all* Life, of nettles also—as we may well divine: for though it is some months since we were protozoa, and we no more recollect the tone of protozoa souls, we conclude that since we at present possess consciousness, protozoa, and no less protophyta, must possess the elements of some kind of consciousness or knowledge, must have a dream, the fantasy of a dream, and at least know that they have it. And so we find how to define Life-progress: “*Progress is a growth in consciousness*”—in knowledge of truth; and here is that law of Life which one is jolly, if he is fulfilling, ill if not, and herein the meaning of this reading greed of modern people, who so read, since, progress at eager speed being their law, they feel that they must needs read, or be doing something, to be at every second bettering themselves, in the direction of extending their consciousness of truth.

But, now, how do they prosper in this? Not too splendidly, I think! We know, indeed, as a fact of science that the Law of Time is That Good Be: consequently each thing which is is to the good: serves for the moment some "purpose" in the evolution of the universe; and were it only to load evolution, still, as a load, it is useful in evolution. So when we asseverate of stealing, or reading, or anything that is, that it is "bad", we mean so far as we can perceive, and it is our duty to seek with all our wrath to root out or prune it with all speed, if we believe it bad, as if it were really bad: for this our belief, too, is involved in The Plot, and if we succeed in killing the thing, our succeeding, too, will be good in its hour, as the thing killed was good in its hour.

*Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Cause the great Atlantic,
Shape the gracious land,
The gracious land.*

*Little dooms atomic,
Molecules of fate,
Framed the constellations,
Make their nations great,
Their nations great . . .*

meaning that, since there are *atoms of circumstance* as atoms of matter, pebbles in that temple of history

we see abuilding, hence the little opinions and acts of you and me, as of the pterodactyl crashing through the raddle of the Jurassic morass, are matters of permanent purport, and work in the world. So as regards this reading greed I call it bad (knowing it good), because, firstly, we read without having first learned how to read; secondly, because, supposing we read only the best that has been written, still we read very much more than we should; and then, because nearly all that we read is nearly as bad as bad can be, unnovel novels of feeble little people, offal beneath pity. And if it was the best, still, I say, it would be much too much of a best thing. For is there to be no time for thinking? as how can there be, if every time we sit down in an idle hour, our fingers of their own motion go out to our Job, our Jehovist, Homer, Spinoza, Herbert Spencer, Goethe, Plato? Or do you feel that "Elia" said well when he said, "I love to lose myself in other men's minds; when I am not walking I am reading; I cannot sit and think: books think for me"? Well, "Elia" was an easy creature of a remote era who wrote many essays, and was weak in the head: not the highest of types, you say: whereas what we others are now after is to be finding the right path for our sons of the time to come, and be the highest. Or do you say maybe that your Leibnitz, your Mill, "make you think"? you, as Lamb was, are mistaken if you imagine that—not what one can name thinking. Who made *them* think? No one. "If I had read as

much as others," Hobbes says, "I should be as ignorant as they" (he meant as thoughtless). No, they thought because they were not so weak as to be always reading, and because thought, by use, soon grew to be to them the grandest of hilarities, as the habits of running and slow breathing grow to people who will only grow to them—sweets so deep, that they could no more keep it concealed, but must needs be putting it in a book. As a matter of fact, you cannot smoke and muse in another man's universe in the old coat *he* uses, even these simple little ideas that I am at present expressing to you you get only the off-glow of, not that braw brightness and focus *I* see them in how, then, from our philosophers, wholly preoccupied with their philosophy, and no poets, nor potentates of expression, shall you happen to catch so much as half of all that their eye just managed to catch in a certain light and the mood of a certain moonshine of the mind? Everyone, then, his own seer, his own thinker: and if one asks, as a young lady once asked me, "What, though, shall one think of?" the answer is the answer which I gave to her; "What can one think of, save of God and His Ways?—since there is nothing else. Smoking a cigarette, you may think of the cigarette and the smoke; sitting before a grate, you may think of the grate and the blaze—a thing which, if you should ponder long upon it, would still after trillions of ponderings defy you to solve a small part of its Divine mysteries." What is heat . . . ? Well, as to

that, certainly, we need not be disturbing our wee circlets of head, since at the burden and hoariness of this question the hosts of the Heavens hold their breaths, saying, "Holy, Holy." Heat is some species of force: and if we owned skulls larger than London, we should still find ourselves infinitely far from knowing what a force is, nay, the bigger our skulls grew, the more truly would we be seeing that we did not one bit know, the more confirmed would become the certainty of our eternal journey that we could not by searching find out the Almighty. But there are a thousand doubts and queries about heat. . . . Heat hardens an egg, softens an egg, pan, causes brass to expand, rubber to contract—of all the extraordinary facts! Water, in growing cold, contracts, then all at once—*expands*! Now, is not this enough to fret a seraph's front, if he does not know? It is not, probably, an insoluble problem. possibly we, with our pretty wit, may solve it. Or shall we say that the water in our jars is an article in which certain persons called Thomson, Bohr, are somehow more concerned than we are? No, we will not, I believe, say that: that would be too feeble of us. Let us think, then, of these things; ponder upon the ways of God; upon the grate's steel, that negro rock within it: upon the dream of the meeting in the deep of the eras between that particular piece of anthracite and me, the entrancing mass of romance in that tryst! For the coal-measures of England came into being some ages ago—before Horsa's braves stormed, now,

or the arm of Abraham had planted his staff to travel out of Haaran, or a Vihaara been built, or a Sabeian, heart-smit, built him an altar to the Morning Star. As for Kensington, it was not then, nor its mayor there to stare, no man, no mammal, was; nor no beeches nor birches were to be seen in the world; a few firs, maybe; and ferns, ferns, thronging in forests monstrous high; and the heavens, I divine, were of a heavier hue; and the moon in her heyday loomed bigger then, I think, over those woods and lagoons within whose glooms the labyrinthodon brooded. Moreover, we know, those coal-measures were some ages in making their layers—more than a thousand years, more even than four thousand; more than four thousand thousand millions on millions. And we know that they were made for (or to) the use of men (since men *do* use them), and one particular lump was made for (or to) my use on a particular winter's night (since on that night I do use it), and a myriad suns uprose, and clomb, and most pensively set, and the lump of coal waited to come to me, then it came to a meeting with me, and I did not see it, I was reading Poincaré on entropy. But one should think a bit, too, shouldn't one? The thing is to educate oneself a little—to *awake one's consciousness of the truth of things*: this being even what education is—a bringing out, awaking, liberating one's brain to an active, an astonished, a romantic consciousness of facts: for whereas men, now, and cows, see many things, and wonder at

nothing, over men and angels—educated souls—live at most moments in an adoration of amazement. To conjure up, then, one's consciousness: that's the thing: a thing we will never get from books, though good books can instigate, but a thing to be got by sitting and thinking for one's self of the way of God; and if it is an irksome work at first, as running is to plump persons, the end of it is strength, independence, hilarity, and happiness. What we want, and are dying for lack of, in our islands is exactly this habit of philosophy, is it not?—the mental strength, independence, and *liberation* of philosophers: until we attain to which liberation, as they are attaining abroad, Britons, you may bet, ever must be slaves, and in the end slaves of philosophic foreigners.

To think, then, and so, I think, we have our first lesson in learning to read: DON'T READ.

Well, but I should never be able to persuade any one to give up reading altogether; nor do I wish to: for those very philosophers whom we have to copy, who were philosophers because they were not always reading, would have been but lean philosophers if they had never read anything. We must thus be reading a bit: and, having mentioned how much, we have to see *what*, and especially *in what way*. As to what, *Tit-Bits*, now, is no Feast (of Reason); and though *Answers* answers nothing, it has, I think, something to answer for. To me it seems clear that an abuse of the invention of printing, the most ludicrous, the most huge, has been committed in

our epoch! and I venture to predict an epoch when in a century not a tenth of the printed stuff at present produced in six months will offer itself to occupy, to confuse, and to use up the Commonwealth. I observe, by the way, that Herbert Spencer and others think well of "an abundant literature", but they, or else I, must be pretty dull in this. An abundant harvest, indeed; an abundant barter: but I can't think of a reason for this "abundant literature". For this interval, look, subsists between an ear of corn and a book: that an ear of corn eaten is eaten; but a book read is not consumed; a million others may read it, either that particular volume, or a copy of it. Nor is this all: for everywhere through the domain of Nature that which is eminent is rare in the way of a ratio, as men breed at a speed less rapturous than rabbits, rabbits than sprats. Well, the production of press-stuff is at present just in this low or rabbit-sprat mood of evolution: and, if our paper, *Something to Read*, had been shrewd enough to name itself *Nothing to Read*, that had been just the truth. How it comes that our Government, which gives an eye to our milk, sends our wires, does not embark upon the more important job of supplying to our minds and hearts, as a monopoly of its own, the two new art-books a year that we may need to use, I don't know. If you insist that art-criticism hardly exists in our country, and wish to know who, then, is to choose those two so beautiful books, I answer that criticism—at all events literary criticism

—is not at all what many think it: not at all an art, for example, nor a question of the impressions of this or that little man's palate, opinions: it is a science, in which the judgments of one who has become perfect in it are subject only to so much uncertainty or imperfectness as are the judgments of a surgeon or a plumber, and critics so scientifically strict and right will arise, I think, quickly after a need for them arises. Meantime, the deluge. No dearth of "Nothing to Read" here! For not merely are the people who wield the pen a legion, but each seems to wield it with what speed he can achieve in a species of shriek. They wish to live. . . . But are they wits? It seems a suspicious thing that a wit should wish to live by his pen, since even the penmen who are luckiest in a moneyway do not have half so much money as a wit would have in other paths. Are they wits? If they are not wits, what the deuce are they doing with an art-tool? If they *are* wits, why, if they have no money, do they not abandon art a bit, get some money somehow—invent some bawble, dash off a *Charley's Aunt*—there's no difficulty, if he is a wit—then hark back to his art? Indeed, it seems to me that one *should* do this, *should* convince oneself of wit in some such actual fashion before tackling the most ticklish of tasks: for we must not think that the human spirit is split up into little compartments, or that Wilkie Collins could do a work of art a quarter so good as wits and worthies and walkers with God like the bringer of wireless or Otto of the four-

cycle engine. That would be odd, if it could be so. But induce, say, Otto to take it up, and his brain will assuredly produce you a book truer, shrewder, closer to the core of Being, than the whole mass and scrap-heap of fiction books yet scribbled by man. For a wit is a wit, and will do what he wills to do. If you answer that Chatterton was a pauper, that Wagner got to pawning his goloshes, I say again that I cannot understand that—if they were wits: they could have done something cunning. Why, now, can't our Government go round to everyone, asking "What are you?", and if he says "An author", let the Government answer, "Oh, nonsense: you have no idea what an author, or auctor, is: an auctor is an increaser—an increaser of folks' consciousness of the truth of things. *You* are not an increaser of anything. But come—to boot-making: and now, for the first time, you will be really an author, really an increaser of the weal and week's work of the world." For, in truth, the sum of art-books so far produced, vast as it is, comes to but little, if you think of it; there have been no great writers, "great" meaning of a radical and grand practicality in grappling with facts—unless you call *writers* men like Darwin, Newton, Hume, who, indeed, because their mighty minds could not but find themselves at ease in every field, wrote better than half the roll of those who have thought themselves writers, but, nevertheless, were far too full of a world of other concerns to acquire more than half of the art, the science, and

the mind of writers. For, if there have been great writers, you can find and give me their names on your fingers. Job, you say, the Jehovist of Genesis. You add Homer perhaps? However, if you go down into yourself, are a little of a critic, you will find, I think, that your delight in Homer is a delight due to your remoteness from him—to a swageing quality of *quaintness* that you are conscious of: and delight in a writer, mind, is terribly likely, if one is not careful, to beguile one's brain into an impression of greatness where no greatness is, i.e., a grand and radical consciousness of facts. As to the genius, Shakespeare, he was not a writer. Or do I seem to speak now with a certain accent of pertness and world-challenge of Tolstoi, which, however, is but slightly to the liking of my kind? Tolstoi, half of whose treatise *What is Art?* I have been reading, is an estimable soul, but not himself a writer, man of letters, is too nobly at war, let us say, to know about *what is Art*, and about writers and writing. Moreover, as I have said, literary criticism is not a question of the caprice of this man's feelings, or that man's palate, is quite an exact science, a question of facts, nor will a critic ever vex you with statements that he is less prepared to convince you of than of some principle in arithmetic. If you say that critics differ, that De Quincey or Emerson would have derided such a statement as mine that "*Shakespeare was not a writer*", I reply, as Socrates to the Companion in the *Minos*, that "those who know (i.e. are scientists)

must of necessity hold the same opinion with one another on things that they know, ever and everywhere". Critics, then, can only so much differ as plumbers, if they know their trade. Well, but since, like Milton, I make the statement that Shakespeare was not a writer, the question arises (since Shakespeare assuredly did use a pen) what, then, a writer is? The definition is "a writer is a literary artist who seeks to enlarge the reader's consciousness of the truth of things", and, omitting for the moment this of "the truth of things", let us only say at this time "a writer is a literary artist"; on which someone may wish, I think, to know just what "literary" means, and what "artist" means. It is wonderful, by the by, that I should think that anyone would wish to know¹ but when one finds Sir Oliver Lodge indicting Haeckel with "considerable literary ability", I assume that others, too, must wish to know. One wonders with what hectic of the cheek the excellent Haeckel received "the soft impeachment"! he probably did not believe, since it was Lodge who asserted it. But words have certain meanings—each word its genius meaning: and as to the word "literary", "literary" means "lettery", concerned with letters (not with words, we observe, but with letters); and as to the word "artist", Art is the production of one passion¹ or another in the spirit through the action of a particular kind of tickling—titillatio

¹ A "passion" is anything that we suffer, undergo, an eagerness, sneeze, sleepiness.

quaedam (Spinoza)—upon one or other of the five senses; and an "artist" is any being that deliberately does that: not a sparrow prattling, but a black-cock uttering the love-call. So, now, what is a literary artist? He is "a person who deliberately works some passion in the spirit by the action of a particular kind of tickling, with written letters, upon one or other of the five senses". But which one of the five? Not the nostril, now, for that is the province of the producers of perfumes; nor the eye, now, for that is the province of the designer, the dancer, the actor, the architect, the coquette, the painter; nor the taste, for that is the province of those concerned in producing and dressing foods; nor the peripheral nerves, for that is the province of the courtesan, the hammum-man, the masseur: so we see that it is the ear. However, the ear is not now any more, as in the era of, say, Homer, so directly the province of men of letters as it is of the musician; soon, probably, a machine will be produced which will peruse what is printed and repeat it to the ear: after which the art of literature will anew become what it used to be, an art purely aural. But as things at present are, the nerve that the literary artist works upon is that nerve-thread—"commisure" is the correct word—which forms the connexion betwixt the visual centre in the brain and the auditory centre, the thread which, when the visual ganglia see a letter, transmits the telegram of it to the ear ganglia, announcing its sound. This, then, for the time being, is a writer,

a literary artist: he is "a person who deliberately works one passion or another in the spirit by the action of a particular kind of tickling, with written letters, upon the thread which forms the connexion betwixt the visual and the auditory centres in the cerebrum".¹ Of course, when real writing is at the present time read aloud, either with the mouth or any species of phonograph-machine, it again, as in old ages, makes its appeal directly to the ear—I say *real writing*, for there exists a mass of difference as radical as you like between writing that is literary and scribbling that is not, seeing that the former fulfils *the definition of an Art*, and the other, charming as may be the thoughts in that which is scribbled, does not: the difference being as great as that betwixt gravings with a burin and using the organs of talk. For men possess, of course, two methods of expressing themselves—the tongue, the pen: and the two though so profoundly different, will without difficulty interchange their functions: thus, the oratory of Demosthenes was really a writing with the tongue, while your "leading article" this morning was really a speaking with the pen—call it "pen-talking"—call it anything you like, except writing. Or if you desire a definition of a

¹ In respect of one of my works, I urged the publisher to print the letters in *colours*—the letter or letters representing any particular sound to be printed in a particular colour of its own throughout, thus to implicate the eye, too, in the delight of the rhyming and music. This, I think, could be highly artistic. But he said that it would be too expensive—couldn't, in fact, understand what was the matter with me!

writer slightly less formal, so that Carlyle may be brought in, let us say that "a writer is a wit, who, by the concentration of his whole weight of wit and luck, can only just scrape through, like a lady taken in the fix and scrape of labour: so myriad-minded the trick he tries his skill on". For consider that his work is not to say what is to be said: but his work is to say it in those words that are then and there the best words. "She came in and sat down"; "She came in and took a chair"; "She entered and sat"; "She walked in and seated herself"; "Having stepped in, she sat down"; in not less than a thousand instances of shape and sound this little thing may be said: what, then, must it be with those sights and sounds of the mind that the writer describes in a town in the clouds, finer than the spider's trifle? and his work, I say, is not to express them, but his work is to express them in those words, that tone, that heaven knows to be the best. Suppose, now, that the accident of burning had happened to a manuscript of Scott, and also to a manuscript of Flaubert, and that they both, like Carlyle, started out to re-compose their burned works. Well, this is what would have occurred: that not ten sentences, probably, in Scott's second work would have been expressed in the words of the first, whereas every word, probably, in Flaubert's second would have been the same. So, then, Flaubert was a writer, Scott not—not implying that Flaubert's letters and words were those perfect best ones which Hermes might have chosen, only

implying that they were both fine, and Flaubert's best. Besides, a writer is a *wit*—i.e., a gallant with a bigger brain than the man's in the street, whereas, on the contrary, the brain of Scott when dead was seen to weigh less than the man's in the street. Not so Shakespeare's surely—still—could it be that that heedless Bohemian of Elizabethan England, who, having got hold of some glossary or something, wrote down in a whirl the first word he lit on in it, and then died of the effects of drink, was a writer? Sweet Will! so Milton muses, who knew his Will, totting him up to a T in the twottling violin-harmonic of four W's, "Sweetest Shakespeare, fancy's child, warbling his native wood-notes wild"—nor must we think that a mind like Milton's could utter that "wild", that "wood-notes", in a tone untouched with condescension. And if this sounds like heresy to one whose head is crowded with shreds of Shakespeare-phrases, "like household words", let him remember that it is in the genius of us British to speak in little catchwords, parrot-terms, as a friend once showed me an essay commencing with, "Hearts weep for mankind"—the inanity wherewith we say "the sere and yellow leaf", "*pip-pip!*", "To be or not to be", "there's hair!", "the garden beautiful", "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet"—idols of the mind! though no sooner does our brain begin to gain that liberation which embraves us on beginning to think than the result is an utter mistrust of our crusted rucks, mental mirages, charts

of conception: for to think is to be educated: to be educated is to be sceptical. So where I suggest that our heedless Bohemian, "having got a glossary or something, wrote down in a whirl the first long or odd word he found", if someone is shocked at this, his shock is due probably to a failure of his imagination any longer to enter into the mood in which boys and girls live and work, and to his failure to remember that our Will, living in the boyhood of our nation, must have been himself by nature very boisterously a boy. Indeed, there are respects in which the greatest of ancient penmen are necessarily a great deal inferior to the sorriest of modern ones. I find that Shakespeare's consciousness, compared with mine, was like the consciousness of Hodge's fox-hound compared with the consciousness of Hodge. Milton's thoughts "wandered through eternity": C. W. Saleeby's also; but the eternity through which Milton's thoughts wandered, compared with the whirl of eternities through which Saleeby's wander, was like a landlocked harbour compared with Arctic and Atlantic. "to God", as my excellent father said, "be the glory" (as though glory, or anything, could be to anything but God). Let us think, then, in this way of our Will, as a jolly boy and heedless Bohemian of Elizabethan Cheapside, happy in the tones of those reeds of Pan whose melodious breezes he breathed with equal spirit into his pieces of hilarity and sorrow, comedy and "tragedy"—though you will be in the wrong, by the way, if you

imagine that he ever managed a tragedy. For, adopting Aristotle's and Goethe's dogmas as to tragedy, we see that *Othello*, now, is never a bit a tragedy: there must be no "villain" in a tragedy; or, at least, the catastrophe must not be owing to the villain's artifice, but to the hero's "own fault": and Fate must be the villain of the play. No more is *Romeo and Juliet* a tragedy, only a calamity, because there is no tragic sense of "fault" in the lovers, moreover, it ends happily¹. Nor is *Macbeth* a bit a tragedy. for the man of a tragedy must not be a criminal lunatic, look, not a murderer, like Richard the Third—must be "*like ourselves*", an imperfect but worthy person, "a good man struggling with adversity", within him, without him. If you say that in every bosom a criminal lunatic slinks, that may be true; but not so near in us that we can experience for murder that "pity", or, as I prefer to say, "*compassion*", "*sympathy*", "*Mitleid*", which true tragedy induces. Nor is *Lear* a tragedy: for whereas in *Macbeth* we have all "terror" and no tragic "pity", in *Lear* we have all "pity", and no tragic "terror"—unless that is meant for terror where someone thumbs out someone's eye, saying, "out, out, vile jelly". Moreover, the hero of a tragedy mustn't *start* by being mad, as *Lear* seems to have started, or we lose all feeling of "own fault". No, we can see that tragedy was a task over earnestly

¹ I do not say this in its disfavour, though, since a tragedy, after the tragedy, *should* find final happiness, to be true. for Life, so far, after its tragedies, has ended happily; and will haply end ever happier.

grand for our hurried, and hungry, and Hebe-worshipping Bohemian, though he certainly knew the glances of the tragic Muse. I should say that *Hamlet* is a tragedy. but, then, such a muddle-headed tragedy. . . . Far, indeed, be it from me to preach that an author ought to set explicitly in a shop window all his ineffable philosophy for the benefit of raw eyes: for writers, look, simply will not do this: but when wits brighter than a writer's can't after three hundred years even decide if the writer's hero was, or was not, mad, we may be certain that some smack of burnt sack was in the work. Thus much as to the matter of the tragedies; but with respect to the manner, I remember that even as a boy droiling over Shakespeare, "with notes", for examinations, I used to be amused at the solemn comments made by grave dignitaries of Oxford upon the vagaries in idiom, irresponsible as a Babu's dribble, of our heedless Bohemian. I have now at my hand a Shakespeare, I will open it, and the passage on which my eye chances to light I will quote:

*"The tyrant custom, most grave senators,
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war
My thrice-driven bed of down: I do agrize
A natural and prompt alacrity
I find in hardness.
Most humbly, therefore, bending to your state,
I crave fit disposition for my wife;
Due reference of place and exhibition;*

*With such accommodation and besort
As levels with her breeding "*

Or this on the same page:

*" . . . No, when light-wingéd toys
Of feather'd Cupid seel with wanton dulness
My speculative and offic'd instruments,
That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
Let housewives make a skillet of my helm,
And all indign and base adversities
Make head against my estimation."*

Now, when we know absurd words by heart, as we all know these, it is hard to see their absurdity. What, though, is this? If you say, "not Chinese, nor English, but a kind of Middle-English", I reply, "no kind of English, unless Mrs. Malaprop in Sheridan's comedy talked a kind of Middle-English"—for irresistibly Shakespeare brings to my mind Mrs. Malaprop; and I know that it is not a kind of Middle-English, not only because More, Milton, did not write it, but also because I can remember the mood of my youth, when I was ten, and given to scribbling this very lingo, a lexicon at my side. Since you will say, then, that Shakespeare was not a great *writer*,¹ who, shall we say, was a great writer?

¹ I have been reading a treatise by R. L. Stevenson, in which he tackles the fantastic task of showing that Shakespeare was sometimes literary. but a critic who has not ranged so far in thought, and in that liberation which thinking brings, as to see things with an eye uninfected by the eye-epidemics of the unthinking, can lay no claim to the name. And, as a matter of fact, each of the examples of

That ever interesting critic Edward Thomas, having once demanded of me, "But don't you, in reading Milton, feel yourself in the presence of a great mind?", it was some moments before I gave answer, "But no," I was so taken aback by the (to my habit of mind) novelty of such a notion, having long ago forgotten that it is *in the tradition* to make Milton a great mind. But a critic has, to begin with, to clear his intellect clean of tradition, like a captain clearing his ship for action—to begin with. And if our critic, in reading *L'Allegro*, finds himself in the presence of a great mind, how, one gets to wondering, does he read Schopenhauer, Herbert Spencer, even,

Shakespeare's harmony adduced by this studious, but rather unsuccessful, art-student—call him the Shelley of prose (though more successful than Shelley)—each of his examples of harmony is, in fact, an example of lack of harmony—not a matter of opinion, but of facts, for there are the letters. Not that there are no harmonies in the instances: but Dickens himself could hardly have brought forth a sentence bereft of *all* literary harmony, and so melodious a soul as Will would, by *instinct*, I think, have been moved to be harmonious, too. But the trick of Art has to be deliberate: a lark is hardly to be called an artist, nor are half-harmonies the task of the artist, but all a harmony. But so unlucky is Stevenson in this that even his instance of prose from literary Milton is uproariously unliterary. Curious to say, he does not seem to have known that unaccented vowel-sounds do not form true harmonies with accented, and as to a curious assurance of his that the letters p f v form a harmony, I have never heard such a notion asserted, don't at all know its source, and am certain of its falsity. As a matter of fact, no more than two sounds of the human mouth can form a harmony—as far as I know; the sounds of "Ah" and "Aw", and this owing to the proximity of the muscles that pronounce them, thus a Cockney will call lard "lord", and, on the contrary, the fellows of the West Country, with no little insight, will call a lord a "lard". Milton, Coleridge and Poe apparently also thought that the long O and the long OO form a harmony, but I don't think so. Pope and others actually harmonise the *short* O with the *long* OO, rhyming "love" with "move": but that's wild! as wild as the Wild Will's rhyming of "pleasure" with "together", "compare" with "are", "gone" with "bone(!)" etc.

say, Adam Smith?—he must be so lost in awe, that it must be impossible for him to proceed! I, now, in reading Milton, find myself in the presence of a child's mind—an ancient child's. a mind aspiring, certainly, earnest, pure, bemused, deft, learned (though quite uneducated); but a mind unexploring, local; more mouth than bowels, sound than power; more feeling than perceiving, obedient than leading; giving little signal of that radical and grand practicality in grappling with facts, whereby greatness (or vigour) of intellect is exhibited. Or will you say that your Ibsen was a great writer? But one of the strands of greatness is grandeur, that bigness of gesture of Milton, Goethe, Shakespeare; a certain *allgemeinheit*, (universality), moreover, of the sun and sunset glory. wherein the Norwegian, who to a Japanese would appear all jejune, strange and unrelated, fails of greatness. Or, as to the novelists, will you not say Thackeray? Dickens, now, was a clown. And if "clown" looks too loud a term to tack to "an honoured name", the answer is that Dickens is not an honoured name—if it is the quality, not the quantity, of honour that makes the honour of a name. Grace Darling's, now, I agree to call an honoured name, for the reason that the people who honour her are capital critics of the act they honour her for, whereas the Mahdi's, though of all names the most honoured, if the quantity of honour were the thing, I can't call an honoured name, since I can't consider the flocks of lackalls who honoured

him capital critics of a prophet; and so as to Dickens, though many tight little Viking islands devise many monuments to his honour, still if the critic does not honour him, he is not honoured. Indeed, if you know that writing is a craft whose technique is harder to acquire than virtuosity on the violin, you must know also that one can't hasten from "taking notes" in the House of Commons, without any preparation, into literature, and accomplish it well. And if you know with what horror every Harrow boy observes the poison-basilisk of an iambic verse stolen into the tissue of his prose, and know that Dickens, thinking the jig grand, hopped jogg-trotting through paragraphs in bad iambs, you now think Dickens a clown. But his clownishness goes more profoundly down in him than can be judged from this, showing itself in everything, down to the *outré* mood of the names that he chooses for his characters—characters that have no souls, that have only noses, poses, clothes, for the page of illustrations. Mr. Micawber is a bald head, a stock phrase, an *outré* name, and—no more. Mrs. Someone who says "everything goes contrary wi' me" is that phrase, an *outré* name, a robe and a nose probably, and—no more. That is, they are not characters, they are drawings, drawings infected with caricature, nay, many of them, I think, photos of actual folks known to Dickens. But let us say that they are not photos, nor caricatures, but drawings, excellent drawings: then, because they are drawings, excellent drawings, they are wrong;

nothing so wrong. And if you demand why so monstrously wrong, the answer is that to draw with the pen is to use a wrong tool, is to pestle with a saw, plough with a pounder. What, now, was the shape of Helen's, of Joseph's, nose? Homer, the Jehovist, are careful not to mention that, for that is the painter's care: yet Homer contrives, nevertheless, to embue us with the brightest remembrance of Helen's beauty. For the *rôle* of the pen is to relate—to relate that which is in motion, a race, a rebellion, a rebellion in the breast, since it speaks to that which is in motion in Time, to the Mind, which easily perceives, but not easily sees; whereas the *rôle* of the pencil is to show that which is motionless, the racer in some moment before the race begins, *La Rixe* before the struggle, for it speaks to that which is quiet in Space, to the Eye, which easily sees, but pesters perceiving.¹ Not that the penman may not let himself write a line as to that which is quiet, as Shakespeare acquaints us with the fact that Hamlet was fat: yet let the user of the pen know that even a phrase or two of "drawing" is proof of a failure of genius, is the use of a wrong tool, and borrowing of the brush. What, then, can be said of Dickens, whose whole book, if you look into it, you will see to be of this kind—like (though so unlike) that article of Poe named *The Domain of Arnheim*, a description of a park, in which he wishes to produce in the reader a deep feeling of beauty; and he does, I think, produce a feeling of

¹ As we close our eyes to think.

beauty; but, oh, the mountain of effort on both reader's and author's part, and the mouse of effect! whereas, with the right tool, a pencil, forty times the effect of beauty would have been wrought in the mind with a fortieth part of the effort. So, without further discussion, we will now call our Dickens a clown,¹ and if you say, "and yet the people liked, and like him", the reply is, "No, the people never liked him." The people, certainly, have heard somebody say that they like him, and think that they like him, as they think that they like beer, and whisky, and *Titt-Bits* but, having tasted both beer and whisky, to see, I will take my dying oath that no human brother of mine ever really liked beer and whisky; and as to Art, what the people *really* like is what is right and refined and conformed to the laws of their mind and of Art; only, they know not a little what they like, until they are taught what they like, as an infant is taught, in spite of tears, that the nipple is hardly the highest type of feeding, and that it likes the highest.

Thus much, then, as to what not to read; as to the leakage in the British ship implicit in this abuse of the printing machine which we view; as to the constant loss to the Commonwealth involved in the

¹ I think, though, that *Pickwick* will live, since it is already read. I never met a Frenchman who had read it, but a friend (Arthur Machen) tells me that a French critic told him that, having read it uninterestedly to the middle, he then suddenly uttered "a mad laugh" (*poussait un fou rire*). On the other hand, I remember when a lad seeing a sister, a Methodist saint, sit and peruse it from beginning to end with the gravest face—to my great amusement.

writing, printing, binding, and reading of such cargoes of garbage; as to the long-suffering of God, who has *daily* to read *The Daily Telegraph* through, the lean unleading articles, the criticism, the cricket, causing the Infinite to yawn. And would you be reading it *all*? Oh, beware: "life is brief"; and how solemn, now, is the striking of the clock, its gong sounding the death-knell of the hour that's gone, the very voice of God noising through the void and night-watches of Time, which you may buy for five bob. Beware, then, of "the papers", since in Britain, by a ripping bit of luck, one may easily enough glean what is going on from the notice boards, and get the rest from friends, knock off every kind of periodical (except technical); and, as to books, remember that, since time is not good, but very good, your book, then, must be not good, but very good, must positively improve your consciousness of the truth of things, and produce progress in you, if it is to give you so much as you give to it. So much, then, as to what not to read; but as to what to read, I divide it into two things: (1) science; (2) music—to use an expression of Plato's, meaning whatever is truly poetical: with the proviso, that, though I divide them, yet science is truly musical, and music nigh to science. And as to science since to you has been vouchsafed *the high* favour not to have been born in a former age; since, modern, your main duty is to be modern, since this you can scarcely be, and not be of a scientific mood: therefore, your duty is to

be studious in science, in which I loosely include modern philosophy; and your rule will be to read but few books, which you will curiously choose, though these you will read frequently—at least thrice each mighty writer, the first time to follow and learn of him, the second time to wend alongside and converse with him, the third time to trot first and controvert him. It is well, I think, to know well some one toe in that moving foot of science, as I, since my nipperhood, have kept myself pretty well *au fait* in what men know of chemistry: but that would be rather a tallish order for, say, a married lady rolled in the social maelstrom; nor is it essential. What you want is to pick up with some sort of minuteness a knowledge of those simple, large-minded truths of science, just the subconsciousness of which makes us moderns a different *kind* of being from the ancients. You cast up your eye to the sky at night, you mark its largeness, you form a conception of its size in your thought: well, the earth is larger far than your notion of the whole army and march of all the worlds; yet if the earth was a mote in the eye of one all-knowing, He would not know that a mote was in His eye. Things of that sort, simple, vast-minded: the hoariness of Time, the remoteness of the suns, the hurry of Light, the story of Life. And then, having gathered such facts from books, having got them well into your subconsciousness, remember that you have still to *educate* yourself with them, by drawing them up into your

consciousness through pondering and strong imagining of them; have still to become an overman, and live happily in fairyland, for the universe is fairyland to overmen. I, for my part, do not regard as educated minds like the old Mr. Gladstone's, ever ready for heaven, but unconscious of The Heavens, and I know that there is more psychic value in Prof. Haldane's right auricle than in all the vitals of a mind like Matthew Arnold's. Thus much, then, as to science; but as to music——

But this of music leads me to my third thesis: for first I tried to determine how much we shall read, and found that the reply is "not much", and secondly I inquired what not, and what we shall read, to find that, as to what, the reply is science and music; and now, lastly, we have to find *how* we shall read, science with a devout eye, and music—how?

For to seek to read music without learning how is as useless as to wish to turn tea-taster or champagne-taster in the City without so much as knowing what are the dispositions which an expert detects in excellent tea or excellent champagne. You cannot do it. Though when you are once taught what those niceties are, when you have acquired the science of wine-tasting, then practice will add to you the craft of wine-tasting, till on a day you find yourself a wine-taster. My business, then, is to bring you to see quite what are the beauties of excellent writing, or music: for I find that to teach you how to read, I am obliged to teach you how to write—an Art, the

science of which you may acquire in quite a short time, just as you may acquire the science of shorthand in as few days as that of the violin will take you weeks, yet must spend as many months in the exercise of shorthand as that of the violin will keep you years.

III

OF WRITING¹

How, THEN, to write? that is our thesis.

Well, let us say that a messenger-boy is appointed to bear you a message. then, all those points of excellence which you may expect from him as a messenger-boy you will unite in your art-writing: all those, and no more

What, now, are those points?

Well, you would not want your boy to be all spoiled with smallpox, or uncomely clothed: so you will grant to your thoughts a decent form as to grammar, prosody, etc.

But now the more important points about our boy . . .

Evidently, the main thing is his message—the matter of his message; and, after that, his manner or form of telling it: (1) the gem; (2) its shape.

And as to his matter, we can at once say what it must be: it must be a true message; and then it must be a new message—fresh news; and then it must somehow be a message about yourself, of some interest to *you*; or, bracketing all this into an abstract

¹ Originally addressed to a Mrs Meade of Kensington

form—he must *enlarge your consciousness of the truth of things*, and that intimately.

This, then, as to matter, is your task.

And if you ask, “But is the object of Art precisely the object of science and of philosophy—to enlarge the consciousness?” the reply is, “Yes—what else than to enlarge the consciousness,” i.e., to augment the quantity of Life, i.e., to cause Progress in Life —“that we may have Life, and have it more abundantly?” Nevertheless, the method of Art, though more after the method of philosophy, is as divided from it as the method of philosophy from that of science. Art, for instance, is more intimate and about ourselves somehow, enlarging our consciousness of the truth of our own hearts, and bosoms’ biology principally, and affecting us in an intimate way by a particular kind of tickling of one or other of the five senses. Besides, though the object of Art, like that of philosophy, is the demonstration of some abstract fact, Art does not, as philosophy does, formally state this, but conveys it intimately, as by innuendo and parable, in a glance, a sob, ineffably, in the tone of gossips pottering over a dead body; and it is divided from science, and from philosophy also, in this, that even the facts that it formally states are not concrete, but are themselves, like its abstract facts, abstractions: for, if it tells of a man, an axe, it is not any actual man or axe that exists exactly as it tells of it, as in Dickens, but it is an abstraction from a mass of actual men or axes of that class, like

Hamlet, or Hector's axe, or Gainsborough's *Grace*
And so we get clearly the difference between science,
philosophy, and art:

Science is occupied with facts for their own sake,
and formally states them.

Philosophy is occupied with facts, not for their
own sake, but for the sake of some abstraction, i e.,
some large fact, which it draws from facts, and
formally states it.

Art is occupied with abstractions of facts, not for
their own sake, but for the sake of some larger
abstraction which it draws from facts, nor does it
formally state it, but intimately, exciting the mind
to its perception by a particular kind of tickling of
one or other of the five senses.

In which definition, if you think, you will see
included not only such arts as music (so called),
drawing, writing, and so on, but also the arts of the
actor, the cook, the coquette. And as to the writer,
you see, do you, what the definition implies? you
must find in his writing (1) plot; (2) realism; (3)
romance. And as to plot—or don't you care for
plots, and revel in your Henry James, who doesn't
care for plots? or do you care for plots, and think
that there is a plot in your Wilkie Collins, your
Emile Gaboriau? They could as easily, stealing
with the feet of the midnight thief when the Cosmos
sleeps, sneak Venus from God, and fix her glittering
in a finger-ring for their Felicity's finger. For plots
have been more uncommon than conquests, most

of them evolved not by any one head, it appears, but, so to say, by peoples. What, then, is this thing, a plot? Well, recollecting what Art is, as distinct from Science and Philosophy, you can see what a plot cannot but be, merely, "a plat or fabric of facts, in their nature abstract, the statement of which involves a philosophic abstraction"; and to make this plain, I offer you two plots, both in Shakespeare (but, of course, not Shakespeare's own).

PLOT: Two Italian families are at feud (a truth); a man of one and a woman of the other love furiously (a truth),¹ to this their death is due (a truth)²; and over their tomb their relatives are reconciled (a truth).

ABSTRACTION: Now, how grave a gash in the state, that wrangling! Is there no chemistry can heal its hæmorrhage and hectic? Hate and hacking cannot. But Love does. And the philosophic abstraction inherent in the mere positing of the facts is that Love is a healer.

PLOT: Contumely educes the crudest instincts, as in the case of the Jews of the Middle Ages (a truth). One such Jew induces a merchant to undertake to lose a certain weight of flesh in case of a

¹ A truth, I mean, since, love between them being forbidden fruit, they would be *the more prone to love*. Romeo would love Juliet in gratitude and vanity, owing to the greatness of the gulf she leapt to get to him, Juliet, loving Romeo's love, would love it the more fiercely, since it was unique, a Koh-i-noor among loves, and both would contend in glorifying the greater greatness of the god of love above every god.

² It is a truth (though not in Shakespeare) in the original tale.

failure to pay: for the merchant, never having been himself oppressed, and incapable of conceiving the realness of the effects of oppression, is unconscious that a bond so bizarre can be meant as aught else than a formality (a truth); and the unexpected happens (a truth), for his vessels miscarry, he fails to pay, the Jew claims the flesh (a truth). But the Jew, in his habit of brooding on national wrongs, has, in drawing up the bond, forgotten a detail on the plane of the pigmy and the commonplace (a truth)—that flesh cannot be cut, and no blood shed (a truth): so he is dished.

ABSTRACTION: There is that in the scheme of things which is ingenious in dishing evil, and finally rides smiling in, triumphing.

You notice that they two are true woofs, every item intertwining nicely with every other and with the entirety, as in a Chinese puzzle, or piece of Japanese marquetry—mortise and tenon—and so fulfilling the sense of Art, i.e., “a fitting”, “articulating” (*ἀρραγίστως*), as in the story of Joseph, not as in *The Odyssey*, *Don Quixote*, though these, each in its way, are worthy works, for other reasons, on a lower level. And if you would know why the plot, or plat, stands on so lofty a level, the answer is that, as it only is true to things and to Life, it alone is divine, since the cosmos is a plot, a molecule a plot, the solar rhyming a plot, the story of Life a

plot; and since Plot in matter is the cousin or correspondent of Harmony of Order in manner. Herbert Spencer, I observe, imagined that the absence of plot is an evolution: but, then, he knew not at all what a plot is, thought that there were plots in Wilkie Collins, and would without doubt have gone to the opposite opinion as to plots, if he had ever given any long thought to Art. Thus much, then, as to plots, but about romance and realism—which, now, do you champion? for it appears that people stand in two camps as to the matter, one lot choosing to give their votes to Scott, Schlegel, one lot wishing to vote for Zola. But since the object of Art is to enlarge (or at least to sharpen, or at the very least to refresh) your consciousness of the truth of things, the question naturally is, which of the two is the truer, realism or romance? Well, there can be no question that realism is true, if it be truly realistic; but the truth is that it is not truly realistic, if it be not romantic, since truth is romantic. With a mood of wistfulness in your eyes you look at the moon one night, where, as musing, she walks amid the stars, and you wish that you were there where she muses: wait: before you go to bed you will be there where she muses, if our globe be moving that way, and soon you may be soaring not far from where Venus at this hour leads the crowd of the starry orchestra with her crown and psaltery. Is this romance? trance and tarantula-land? I hear you say “yes”; you whisper “yes”. Well, it is true: so realism, if it

is realistic, if it is true, must enlarge, or sharpen, or at the very least refresh, your consciousness of the truth of that, must reveal that the meanest street reels in that Stream that rolls the eras and the zodiacs, must be romantic, or it is not realism; and romance, on the other hand, must be realistic, hung to the actualities of things, or it is not romance.¹

Thus much, then, as to matter: but as to the manner of your messenger-boy, evidently the most important point of excellence in him will be that he so tell his message, that you see what he means to say, and if the message is only to say that someone will not be coming home that evening, he will easily succeed; but if the message is from a poet who has dreamt of you, and the messenger-boy does not remember the very words that the poet employed, then without doubt to the boy will be necessary a certain *power of expression* to work you to see what he himself sees and means. Expression, then: the power of expressing the inexpressible, and the all but inexpressible—this is the best arm in the author's armoury; and to illustrate for your study, I will present you three instances of the all but inexpressible, and then three of what I call the inexpressible. And as to the all but inexpressible, look at this of Milton (of the moon):

¹ Thus *Huckleberry Finn*, all hints of stars and darkness, is truly romantic, for it is truly realistic; and a lot of *The Odyssey* is truly realistic in a higher land, the realism being more abstract; as the story of Circe is realistic, true to life—but highly abstract realism.

*"As though her head she bowed
Stooping through a downy cloud"*

Or this of Shakespeare:

*"The dark backward and abysm of Time."*¹

Or this of Meredith (of distant thunder):

*"Like a joke running down a table of Titans dining
in the sky."*

And as to the inexpressible, take this of Keats:

*"Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn"*

Or this of Job:

*"When the morning stars sang together, and all the
sons of God shouted for joy."*

Or this of Carlyle:

*"The body lies on the steps; the head is off through
the streets; aloft on a pike."*

¹ Shakespeare, great and greatest in one respect, was not great in expression. (Compare with this criticism, Emerson's criticism, that he was the most expressive of men, and reflect how easy to say things, and how difficult to say deep things.) But this of the "dark backward" is very highly expressive, and so is "there are more things in heaven" etc.—the only two things, I think, that you will find in Will of a high expressiveness. Unfortunately, this of the "dark backward" is an example, not so much of his expressiveness, as of the savage pettiness of the ancients' consciousness. What a mighty summing up of the Geologic Ages, this—"the dark backward and abysm of Time!" But was he thinking of any Geologic Ages? Not Will Shakespeare. It is Prospero who tells Miranda to cast her memory back into "the dark backward" when she was a little thing. *What a waste of thunder!*

What, now, do you say of these? What of that of Meredith's . . . Is it true? Is it new? Is it precious? If it is precious, why is it precious? Is it not precious owing to this, that it tends to put us in old slippers in the universe, owing to this, that it is *a scientific discovery*, specially precious because hardly any formal scientist could have lighted on it, and because we have it spoken in a humour and mood peculiar to one man, who alone could have communicated it to us in that humour. in which humour we for the future may use it? And if you desired to know the title of the book that it is in, or anything else that is in that book, I could not tell you, for I have read three of Meredith, and the fact is that his lack of philosophic volume, and his submission to the influence of the brain of Shakespeare and the Arabians, spoiled him of being strictly a voice, or verily impressive to a critic. Besides, his paragraphs are anon masses of probable misprints, mixed with a sister of Mrs Malaprop—not how “the simple great ones” write: this obscurity being due to a cowardice, unlike Browning's obscurity, which is due to a kind of mental stutter. due (in Meredith) (1) to a horror of the commonplace, the shallow; (2) to a subconsciousness of being commonplace, shallow; (3) to a consequent neuropathy as to plain statements, for fear of appearing (to himself) what he is: hence his thoughts are veiled prophets of Khorassan, all veil, and no prophecy. Precious, however, is his power of expression (of ideas as dis-

ting from thoughts); and you observe how, for the reason that I had learned to read, I immediately seized upon the one supreme beauty in whatever the book was, and by improving with it my consciousness of the truth of things, enriched myself with it for ever. And as to that marvel of Carlyle: "the body lies on the steps; the head is off through the streets"—can you read this? In no lingo of man but English, I think, could that mad glance have been hinted, by no mortal in English but Carlyle. But what vivacity! Bacchic alacrity! *The head is off through the streets . . .*! Do you catch? see the spontaneity of the head? the rapture of hilarity with which it snatches itself away? It is strictly inexpressible, yet he expresses it, by miracle. Pity only that he did not say "the head's off" instead of "head is".

But how about your boy's voice? If his message is of any length, his sounds will much affect your sense of it, their (1) harmony (kinship with one another), and their (2) melody or tone (kinship with their subject and the mood of the hearing ear). So you will be harmonious, or literary. And if you demand: "Is literature nothing more than harmoniousness?" the answer is: "Nothing more"; and, as I presented you examples of perfect matter and of perfect expression, I next present an example of perfect literature:

"a, a, a; ba, ba, ba; ca, ca, ca"; and if you demand: "Is it not, then, necessary that the letters make

words?" the answer is: "No, not necessary for literature"; though it is an evolution, look, that the letters should make words; and it is an evolution that the words should make sense; and it is an evolution that that sense should be beautiful; but all this has nothing to do with *literature*, which is concerned, not with words, or with sense, but with *letters*, and men of *literature* are men of *letters*, not wordy men, inventors of ever new and beautiful mosaics of *letters*. For you know what was the origin of literature? Religious, was it not? And religious it must mind to continue to be, for if a book is not a Bible, it is not a book. Its origin was religious in this wise: that the old hierophant, obiah-priest, beating upon his tom-tom within the forest-groves in celebrating the Mysteries, to goad his rabble to dance with abandonment, gabbled sounds of instigation, again and again the same sound:

*"Dar, dar, dar, dar,
Dar, dar, dar;
Ah, gar, gar, gar, gar,
Gar, gar, gar."*

Go again, however, down into the glen a thousand years later, and now you'll hear (still with a dwelling on the same sounds):

*"Dart, darlings, dar, dar,
Dar, dar, dar;"*

*Ah, garters all, gar, gar,
Gar, gar, gar."*

And steal near yet a thousand years later, and now you'll hear (yet the same sounds):

*"Daart yourselves staark, maidies,
Naked as a staar!
Aah, get your gaarters laaughing, ladies,
Daart your legs faar!"*

And so the thing would continue, until that humming thunder of Homer will be heard rolling, and Poe's pibroch skirling. You may know that of Madame de Stael's, "un son nous fait désirer celui qui doit lui répondre, et quand le second rétentit, il nous rappelle celui qui vient de nous échapper"; and Plato's διδάσκουσι με ἴσα λέγειν οὕτως ὃι σοφοί, "I learn from the wise to use rhymes"; or, if you noticed on the "notice-boards", some months since, "Reign of Terror in Teheran", this is literature, at any rate literary—would be literature, if it had been "Reign of Terror in Tayeran" (emphasis on the Tay): for how much more terrible a business is a reign of terror in Tayeran than a reign of terror in mere Ispahan; whereas pippins and hips in Ispahan (emphasis on the Is), are, by some profound principle of repetition in music and musical utterance, more suited to our soul's disposition than pippins and hips in Teheran. Harmoniousness, then: nor

is our load only to be harmonious in the sounds we use, but to choose *those* sounds which are most suited to our sense: thus, "ah", "aw", are tall and haughty, "p" is a very spirited little letter, "oo" is useful for pity (as where Will, quite instinctively, I think, whines "poor woounded name, my boosom as a bed shall lodge thee"), and so on in a thousand subtleties known to the old hound's nose. And all this harmony and choice of letters to be joined with a choice of words, you observe—those *very* words which are best for expression: a contradictory business, "more endangered than when Argo passed through Bosphorus betwixt the jostling rocks"; as to which we see, I think, that here is a task which only a carl born lucky to the heart, born with a caul, nay, with a call, need attempt to meddle in. Thus far, then, as to literature, or harmony, or the art of writing as distinct from penstalking.

But how about the boy's tone? That is important! for if somebody has been run over by a motorbus, and he gives you the story of it with a grin, or if he gives you the poet's dream eating nuts, this will be by no means pretty. Tone, then. Now, tone, of course, is thousand-fold. and since the tone of a whole tome or piece must be so-and-so to suit its mood, and the tone of each part or page must needs be subtly so-and-so to suit *its* mood, and yet the tone of each part or page be in harmony with the tone of the whole, here once more, we see, is a task

that only a carl born lucky to the heart, born with a caul, need attempt to meddle with. Moreover, in tone there is invariably in the greatest writers a something, a grain, a tone within their tones, which I in my own mind always call *naïveté*—an element not richly represented in English literature (in Bunyan principally), but very richly in French, in Greek, in Hebrew, in Heine and Wieland. How a little savour of it would have saved Poe, Meredith, Milton!¹ But I am not certain that I am able to make myself clear as to what I mean by this word *naïveté*—something like what Goethe meant by his *heiterkeit*? Simplicity, yes, to the edge of childlikeness, of childishness; but something much more, a *pregnant* simplicity, struggling against poetry, against grandeur, against agonies of emotion, and remaining triumphant, a burning nerve yearning to blurt its burden, but restrained by the very rein of reticence, and not the shadow of an adjective or adverb within a thousand furlongs to whittle down the nouns and verbs. “Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these”: this is “naïf” for you see what a world of ermines and purflings of purple the Speaker leaves unmentioned here, yet mentions. And I add yet one example—one not

¹ It is present, though, in some of the small poems, and in *Paradise Regained*, which last, in this, as in all other respects (except harmony), is far enough ahead of *Paradise Lost*.

only of *naïveté*, but of every preciousness of tone, of expression, of matter and of manner, the phrase that in my view takes the cake as the truest, most musical, most beautiful, most romantic, till now ranted by a man's mouth:

"Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained to the days of the years of the lives of my fathers in the days of their marches . . ."

If you can read this, you have *learned* to read music and the yearnings in the tumults of October breezes. The stories of those "fathers' marches" have been told deliberately: you have lived with them—long marches; and, generation after generation, they have strangely gone, engulfed in the gorge of God, the suns no longer know them; and now the aged Jacob, he, too, is about to foot it down that steep, and he says, "Few and evil . . ." Oh my, if the Sphinx should speak, just so, I think, she'd speak, so mindfully, so miserly, so almightily. And on the whole, this whole tome of the Jehovist, in its emotion at, and intoning of, that unknown word of the world and the worlds, is to Homer at his uppermost note what Homer is to a pennynovelette; nor can I, either, read it well in a town, but at dead of night, in a waste place, in a tent, where sounds of wintry winds and a reign of breakers drown the brain in a revel of drowzes and reveries.

So, now, we have finished with our messenger. His excellencies, we can see, will consist in

- (1) Matter
- (2) Expression
- (3) Harmony
- (4) Tone.

Those four: and if he combine two or more of them, we will find the following code of law to hold:

Expression + Harmony = "Magic" (Art)

Matter + Expression = "Interest"¹ (not Art)

Tone + Harmony = "Charm"² (Art)

Matter + Expression + Tone = "Fascination" (not Art)

Matter + Expression + Harmony + Tone = "Beauty" (Art).

We will also find the law that Harmony or Order in manner is the cousin or correspondent of Plot in matter; Expression in manner the correspondent of Realism in matter; Tone in manner the correspondent of Romance in matter.

And as regards Matter, you will find that the masters so far (or the great masters, if you like adjectives) are in the following order:

¹ Compare *The French Revolution* with *Paradise Lost*. In *The French Revolution* good matter + expression-in-excel sis = much interest In *Paradise Lost*. no matter + expression-nearly-in-excel sis = no interest

² Compare *Paradise Lost* with *The French Revolution*. In *Paradise Lost* splendid tone + harmony-in-excel sis = much charm (I should have said "excellent charm", but the tone wants *variety*, making it impossible to read more than three pages at one time). In *The French Revolution* fair tone + no harmony = no charm

(1) The Jehovist; (2) Goethe; (3) Job;¹ (4) Lucretius; (5) Plato; (6) Homer; (7) Molière; (8) Cervantes; (9) Hugo—not all of these, you perceive, being writers, i.e., artists, but all a kind of artist, not formal philosophers, whom I leave out.

And in the matter of Expression, you will find that the masters, or the great masters, are in the following order:

(1) Job; (2) Carlyle; (3) I; (4) Lucretius; (5) The Jehovist; (6) Keats, (7) Milton; (8) Meredith; (9) Flaubert; (10) Browning; (11) Homer; (12) Coleridge, (13) Goethe.

And in the matter of Harmony you will find that the masters are in the following order:

(1) Poe;² (2) Homer; (3) Milton; (4) Swinburne;

¹ Job, as we have him, is certainly the work of more than one hand, but one can have no difficulty in fixing *the* Job-man.

² As to Poe's harmoniousness, it is to be remarked that, though harmony is the whole of literature, harmony is not the whole of writing, and Poe's single eye to harmony sometimes, to the forgetfulness of everything else, sometimes gives an effect that is no less than grotesque! Nothing, in fact, could more amusingly prove how "out of it" the English and American peoples are in the matter of Art than their serious acceptance of *The Raven* and *The Bells* as poems. They are not poems! I remember listening to the late Mr. Christie Murray recite *The Raven* to low piano notes, with low lights, and a bowl of Hollands-punch about (for the charming man had one morning vowed a thousand vows as to whisky, and, to stick to them, had to pitch to gin)—a recitation in such a tone of unction! and if I had told him that it is not a poem, he would have felt pained. But it is only an exercise in harmony, and no more a poem than "scales" for the piano, or "studies in chords" for the fiddle are pieces of music. "His eyes have all the seeming of a daemon's that is dreaming", is all very well, but when no one, as I

(5) Virgil; (6) Dante; (7) Sophocles; (8) Racine; (9) Coleridge; (10) Cicero; (11) *The Nights*; (12) Flaubert; (13) Loti; (14) Sir Thomas Browne; (15) Demosthenes; (16) Lord Chesterfield; the verse-men stepping first, not because more harmonious, but because harmony is harder in what is metrical as well.

And in the matter of Tone you will find that the masters are:

(1) Shakespeare; (2) The Jehovist; (3) Dante; (4) De Guérin; (5) De St Pierre; (6) Heine; (7) Aeschylus; (8) Poe; (9) De Quincey; (10) *Ecclesiastes*; (11) Homer; (12) Omar-i-Kayyam; (13) Wieland; (14) Coleridge; (15) Keats; (16) Bunyan; (17) Milton; (18) Gray; (19) Horace; (20) Loti; (21) Wordsworth; (22) Petrarch; (23) Job; (24) Virgil; (25) Fénelon; (26) Dowson; (27) Burns; (28) Goethe; (29) Carroll; (30) Arnold; (31) Boccaccio; (32) Tennyson; (33) Corneille.

deem, knows what a *daemon* that is *dreaming* is like? "And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor"—imagine the mad position of *the lamp* to manage such a thing, when the raven was on the *pallid* bust of Pallas just above the chamber door—"just" is charming! the "j" of "just" to harmonise with the "ch" of chamber. Of course, beside harmony, *The Raven* (not *The Bells*) has tone—harmony-in-excelsis, tone-in-excelsis, so charm-in-excelsis, still, it is not a poem: for it lacks matter, or the matter is so mechanical, uncalled-for, false, that it can't be called matter, and it lacks all expression. (I except, however, from this criticism, the line, "Ah, distinctly I remember, it was in the bleak December"—which is really romantic, i.e., true, and also these three, "Caught from some ill-fated master, whom unmerciful etc." The rest is an exercise in harmony and tone, as *The Bells* is an exercise in harmony alone.)

Now, our lists, though gravely meditated, are not to be taken without one grain of salt—not for any lack of exactness in criticism, since there is hardly any difficulty as to that, but for lack of a vast familiarity with what has been written; a scholar, not without grounds, would doubtless think me ignorant; and though I have besought you not to be a scholar, but a philosopher, because a scholar, like a tailor, is scarce the ninth part of a mind, still, it is jolly sometimes to know scholar-stuff.¹ For example, I haven't included Job and the Jehovist in the harmony-list, ignorant as to whether they were great harmonists like the Arab scribes. For the same reason the lists rather get degraded into guessing toward their ends in regard to order; the names themselves, though, are well; and toward the beginnings I am always big with significance as to order also—sure, for example, that, Job alone excepted, no son of Adam ever possessed a power

¹ It is interesting to note that in the 1909 version of these lists M. P. Shiel wrote with regard to the Masters of Matter in passages now cancelled "And why it is impossible for me to name my place in the list with modesty is, I think, obvious: for I would challenge any critic in so objective a matter as Matter, to fix his own merits in his own mind with a nice modesty", explaining, in a footnote, "I don't a bit mean by 'modesty' what you possibly think that I mean! It has in it no essential sense of 'shyness', for example for wise men are ever modest, and, 'only clodhoppers are shy, *bescheiden*' (Goethe) Modesty means *modus*, just measure, exact criticism, no immoderateness on this hand or on that, as where Jesus, in criticising his genius, says, 'I am greater than Solomon'; this is modest; whereas, if he had said, 'Solomon is greater than I, that would have been immodest, immoderate, without measure, unprecise, unjust" In these 1909 lists of the Masters of Harmony, Shiel placed himself tenth, ahead of Cicero, and in the Masters of Tone, seventh, preceding Aeschylus —J. G.

of expression comparable with Carlyle's,¹ and that the greatest in matter was the Jehovist, in expression

¹*The French Revolution!* Only, though such a roaring Revolution, it is not really a *French* Revolution, but a Hebrew-Presbyterian Revolution, none of the people in it showing any resemblance to Frenchmen! Billaud, or Badaud (some such name), says to Robespierre, "Avec ton Être Suprême tu commences à m'embêter"—how French! This is Carlyle's translation "With thy Supreme Being thou beginnest to be a bore unto me"—the "unto" and the "thou" together being very good. And this owing to no lack of humour! but to a rampant humour to the fact that to this Hebrew-Presbyterian it was impossible to take such a phenomenon as a Frenchman seriously: hence such horse-laughters as "Non-Admiral Duc de Chartres", "misguided young Languedocian gentleman", etc. With this reservation range and revel. And just imagine, in addition, that some spirit with a passion for perfection had once whispered at him "Rhyme, writer, rhyme! such a thing exists in your universe as Order, Harmony, Music, apart from which writing is not writing, but fluent loose pen-talking"—why, then, what then? why, then, I say, you might have beheld a book or two, and our right little dialect for the first time turned into writing. For the first time—for, by bitterish circumstance, the biggish brains like Carlyle, Shakespeare, have not been artists, and the great artists like Milton, Poe, not big brains. Besides, Carlyle was uneducated—lacking a constant consciousness of the facts of science. Hear, for example, Carlyle "And so, in stately Procession (capital P), have passed the Elected (capital E) of France some toward honour and fire-consummation, most toward dishonour, not a few toward massacre, emigration, desperation all toward eternity"—How flat, now, "all toward Eternity"! You can't imagine Spencer calling "all toward Eternity" in that way, any more than "all with jaws"; but to Carlyle's consciousness it was something of a shock of discovery at the moment, and he thought, "I'll put that in!" They were of that mood those Victorians the tone of discovery with which they boomed obvious truths—very amusing, as hear Dumas: "For in Paris whatever one has not the money to purchase may be hired"—solemn discovery! though redeemed by its dear French naïveté (not my "naïveté", yet one of the elements in mine), or hear Dickens of some poor boy "Dead, my lords! dead, ladies and gentlemen! and dying thus around us every day"—the damnable iambic at the end! with such a ghastly jog-trot the horror hops along—"gu-roo, gu-roo, gu-roo, gu-roo, gu-roo"—with his furore for using the wrong tool, here the tool of poetry in writing prose. Or hear the booming of his delusion as to how lunatics muse "Yes—a madman—how that word would have struck to my heart many years ago—how it would have roused the terror that used to come upon me sometimes, sending the blood hissing(!) and tingling through my veins, till the cold dew of fear stood in large drops upon (he means "on") my skin, and my knees knocked together with fright. I like it now, though—it's a fine name. Show me the monarch whose angry frown

Job, in harmoniousness Poe, in tone Shakespeare,¹ the greatest on the whole the Jehovist, if he was a harmonist, "great" being the wrong word, *great* writing being an Everest yet virgin, reserved for the journeyers of the centuries to be.

Thus far, then, as to the technique of writing. As to what one calls "style", that need not keep us, style being but the peeping through of the personality of each writer in his writing, not a part of technique, which is exhausted when matter, expression, harmony and tone have been spoken of. But now that I have taught how to write, which is not where I sought to arrive, the question which I ask myself is, have I also taught how to read, which is

was ever feared like the glare of a madman's eye—whose cord and axe were ever so terrible as a madman's grip. Ho! Ho! it's a grand thing to be mad—to be peeped at like a *wild* lion through the iron bars—to gnash one's teeth, and howl through the *long, still* night, to the *merry* ring of the *heavy* chain, and to roll *and* twine among the straw, transported with such *brave* music, Hurrah for the mad-house! Oh, it's a rare place". And the selectest of those Victorians were infected with this curious crudity: imagine Mr Gladstone and Professor Huxley, two grown-up fair-skinned folk, gravely arguing together as to whether the statements of a primitive *Purāna* like Genesis were scientific—doesn't it seem, not fifty, but five hundred years divided from the aeroplane? Amiable unripe persons! And now they are in heaven, all for they all in their profoundest hearts had a sort of half-faith in heaven, the loud-brabbling Bradlaugh, also, and he also, forgiven, is in bliss, bombastically arguing into Dickens the non-existence, no longer of I AM, but of IAMBics, and we others are glad of this, for this now is our little hour to dance and gladden in.

¹ Shakespeare is first, not because any tone of his is in any sense better than the perfect tones of, say, De St. Pierre or the Jehovist, but because of the extraordinary diversity of his tones, most of them perfect. Hence that *bébête* quoting of his "household words" is less *bébête* than you may think: for though without any wit or worth in themselves, these household words were spoken in some perfect tone, which tone the quoter remembers, but does not remember that when quoted by themselves they must lose their sole merit, their tone.

what I seek to reach? Well, I quite hope so; for since we at present know the niceties of the science of writing, I calculate that some practice should make us as exact critics as the salaried tea-taster is. I will but add some little observations that suggest themselves to me:

1. "Progress", a growth in consciousness of truth, being the object of Art, and truth being anon rude, we should not expect, or wish, our art-work to be all honey-and-water, as servant girls think that they wish their heroes to be perfect, untrue, or as a lady relating to me the tale of a book named *The Beloved Vagabond*, criticised it in this manner: "It offends, the man has dirty finger-nails"—a thing which a French lady would never have uttered; but somehow, in the matter of written things we English seem to be all at sea, to have some radical incapacity of grasp¹ due apparently to a certain crassness rooted

¹ For instance, I recently egged-on an illiterate little nephew to be reading a bit, and made him begin on Shakespeare—a little specialist he is at present in "nose-ear-and-throat", but his first love was "nervous diseases", and presently he returned to me delighted, saying (to my surprise!), "With what wonderful accuracy does Shakespeare depict—melancholia!", and he showed me the passage, a passage in which melancholia, which he so thoroughly knows, is not accurately depicted! whereupon I made him sit, and criticised for him the passage, which was this "I have lately—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercises, and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave overhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears to me no other thing than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours"—a passage in which we have a rapture of adoration for Nature, passioned in adjective added to adjective, which the melancholic, if he ever had, has *forgotten* that he ever had, can, indeed, no longer conceive how anyone ever could have; and I put it to my nephew if, in real life, he heard a diseased mind whirling this species of poetry, would he not run preaching

in the Saxon—not necessarily permanent, seeing that it has already yielded to the influences of years. So in time we will cease to mind that our hero has grimy finger-nails, if that is the case with him, seeing that our great writer is in the place of a god, conscious of his characters' natures with an accuracy, a sympathy, a judgment, which nothing but study will bring us to realise, nor is his business to give us pleasure directly, but to give us progress, to improve

"here is some new disease"—to which he had to answer "true". Nor is this poetry good poetry. The air is not a canopy: a canopy is a *κανοπειον*, a bed-tester—there cannot be an invisible bed-tester. *Canopy* is Mrs Malaprop, scrawled at fierce speed at three o'clock in the morning, with a pottle of burnt sack at one's elbow, the work to be done by ten, or the sackless sack for one. "This brave overhanging firmament", too . . . "Brave" is very bad. I call an army with banners "brave", or the caparison and parade of a Parliament-day when men rave "brave-o!", but the sphinx's lip is not "brave", the firmament is over unperturbed and perfect in repose to be "brave", nor does the firmament "overhang": for if a thing hangs, it must hang from something, but there's no sense in us that the firmament hangs from anything. And "this majestic roof fretted with golden fire"—what about that? If one is lashing adjectives about in this lavish fashion, the least one should do is to see that one's adjectives are curiously true. I, for my part, should never *dream* of calling the starry vault "majestical", not because it is so cheap and easy—not that—but because I can spy through the corner of my eye that it is not curiously true. Samson stamping I should call majestic, a tsar or a schoolmaster stalking (magister *means* a schoolmaster), but not those beaming mild eyes. As to "fretted with golden fire", this is due to a confusion of mind between "fretted gold" and "fretful fire", and, as it stands, has no meaning, or at least not the meaning it intends. To each of which criticisms I can see you saying "true", and "true", yet saying it reluctantly, since you scent that, whatever one may say, the phrases remain wonderful. Well, if they are wonderful, why are they so? We have noticed that the matter is all wrong, expression all wrong, harmony all but absent—there remains only tone, melody: and this is wonderful. Oh dear, here is the very modulation cadence, and measure of Melancholy meditating, the very *rhythmos* and droop of rueing: and so the little nephew, though so wrong and foreign to written things, felt truly, too, since the tone is true: and tone by itself is blessed.

our consciousness of the truth of ourselves and of the cosmos.

2. Let us cease to regard our "great" author as indecent, for, surely, the truth that we always do should lead us to the conclusion that there must be something *outré* in our view of indecency. It is among the grand facts of biology in this cycle of the history of Life that we English are a little ridiculous—or do you not see the actualness of this fact, so frequently repeated? Neither do I at this instant perceive it quite in white light perhaps—to perceive it, one needs to stay a year or two, say in Paris, in the society of persons of an alert and worldly turn of mind, then find oneself suddenly come to Kensington: whereupon for three, as much as four, days one's cheeks keep puffing out with fun at each essentially Kensington thing that one sees. *The English are a little ridiculous*—an actual fact, and a grand fact: ridiculous in our Saxon crassness, in our ignorance of English or of any language of man,¹

¹ The typist of my writings types things at which a German who has learned a little English would giggle¹. I have recently been reading a treatise by a physician whose name is familiar to you, and this thing has been to me the cause of abandonments of glee which a hundred bags of *Punch* could not have brought me, so that I have called it blessed on each page some shrieking craziness of speech, as. "She suddenly sees visions of people who have been dead", "Says she can't recollect after leaving school", "Less females were discharged during the early part of the year, and the least in April", "Those women liable to, or in whom has been developed, any previous attack", "He dreaded his own safety, which was beyond all self-control", "He first became a preacher, having previously enlisted as a dragoon", "It would be tautological and tiresome to enumerate here the descriptions, even the names, of his works", "In one of the rooms was a large menagerie of cats, protesting in favour of (he means proving) his reputed love of animals . . . there were cats in sorrow, and cats in anger, cats of character

in our religiosity,¹ our irreligiousness, in the platitude of our ladies' aspect, their long teeth,² in the Negro manners of our labouring class, in our concern about opinions³ and persons, our callousness as to truths and ideas, in our Hottentot horror of certain worthy little words, "bluddy",⁴ "bureaucracy",

and imbecile cats, but all bore a *strong, though faint*, resemblance to a typical cat", "Had I decided to have discussed"—and so on. Of course, this physician, a busy citizen, wrote in haste, but a French physician, writing in haste, does not write French in this style.

¹ In France it is at present a shameful thing for a male to "go to church", and aspirants for Government-service only timorously admit that they go, if they go. In England, in the lower-middle class, it is still a little *mal vu* not to go. Curious contrast in evolution!

² "Mais leurs longues dents!" A French girl agaze murmured to me, and I breathed "The better to eat you, my dear!"

³ Think of "the papers" troubling to report this "He (the Lord Mayor) had never had any faith in the possibility of flight, but recent events had rather caused him to alter his opinion"—Ah! . . . Or take this of that most amiable, but most British of philosophers, Sir Oliver Lodge, in a criticism of Haeckel, where he does not slay Haeckel by saying that Haeckel is an unelevated mind, with a tendency to think that he knows something of the ultimate nature of things, but he slays Haeckel by saying this, that "the progress of thought has left Haeckel, as well as his English exemplar(!), Herbert Spencer, somewhat high and dry, belated and stranded by the *tide of opinion*, which has now begun to flow in another direction" . . . The statement made is baseless, by the way, but the point is the irrelevance and mental levity of it, the strangeness that one should be at the pains to make it, as though there existed some species of relation between opinions and truth. Think, now, of the Saxon crassness of this: a thing as uncritical in temper, as Briton, bluff, and blunt, as the roughness of the statement that Spencer was the exemplar of Haeckel—Haeckel with his loud gnosticism, now, and Spencer with his profound devoutness, mouthing his "holy, holy", as prostrate on his face as the Moslem at prayer.

⁴ A lady, in telling me of a ghost at a séance who wanted less light (not "more", like Goethe), told me that the ghost, when asked "What, then, must we do?"—for all blinds had been lowered—made answer, "Spit on the B fire". So I asked her, "But did the ghost say 'B', or was he more explicit?" "Why, yes," she replied with a certain mystery of manner, "he spelled the word right out!" "But which word," I said, "bluddy or blasted?"—for I understood that that

"blasted", "hell"¹—and so on. And if this was the one fact about us that we are a little ridiculous, little that would matter; but there is this other, that we've got the ships, we've got the men, we've got the money too, are the obvious bosses of this orb: and you see the peril resident in a ridiculous boss.² So, at all events, it is in this of indecency in Art, we need to be awfully guarded lest we regard the sacred as indecent, or we make ourselves a laughing stock. As I was once greatly offended on being given by a friend to read a review named *Jude The Obscene* in regard to a novel of Thomas Hardy's, in whom, from a book of his that I had looked through, I could not believe obscenity to be possible. So I questioned my friend, and when he informed me

would do her good to say it Well, she would not say it, and I insisted. "Come now," I said, "bluddy or blasted?" But after all she vanquished me, for, with a certain smirk she answered at last, "The former."

¹ I once made one of my characters say—quite characteristically—"tough as hell", and when the "proofs" came to me, this had been changed by a little paper-editor into "tough as Hades" (Hades the insubstantial) I had sufficient energy to change the "a" into "i", and in the end it appeared "tough as Hides"—with a capital H. Also I once wrote "He was a thing young, lank, pink of trunk, and his being stank of drink"—a thing of no wit, but sufficiently recherché in a literary way to charm the heart of Poe or Milton, with its eight harmonics of the consonant "ng", most of them ending in "k" conceive, then, my scream of glee, not unmingled with disgust, when another editor sent me "proofs" with "his being stank of drink" commuted into "his being exhaled beer"—the flat man. Seriously, though, does it not seem that such little men are a bane, and that the number of them has but to be enough raised to change the bravest nation into a multitude of slaves and dullards?

² Like a little curate-schoolmaster whom I knew—and a brilliant little schoolmaster he was, but he was too insignificant in stature, and he had a goitre on his neck, so the boys in the end rebelled and beat him—no reason but that he was a little ridiculous.

that someone in the novel had tossed the male organ of a hog at somebody's face, the question came up between us: "Is this indecent?" He seemed doubtful; so I said, "Let us come *now* to a conclusion as to this." I now made him read a phrase of a book, asking if he thought that indecent, and he thought it so; so now I gave him to see the name of the book, and he now no longer thought it so, because it was a doctor's book. "So, then," I said, "it is merely the tone wherein a thing is written that makes it indecent?" "Yes," he agreed, "that is true—as to a doctor." "But how about a philosopher?" I said, "or a poet? whose tones are as foreign to, and more cocked aloft of, the tone of indecency than is a doctor's?"; and in the end we saw that this in the novel was not indecent, if the tone was that of a philosopher or a poet, since these, in so far as they are actually so, cannot be indecent: but a tone alone can be indecent. We must remember to distinguish in this between (1) grossness, and (2) indecency: for the easiness of indecency as an art-effect offends, whereas grossness, if not too gross for the Age (as Dante's grossness for our Age) is one of the arms in the artist's armoury. *Venus and Adonis*, for instance, is indecent without being a bit gross; whereas *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Bible*, crowded with grossnesses, are so without being in the least indecent: for *Merry Wives* laughs, and *Venus*, always dead serious, never laughs; and we know with how naïf a grace some of the Biblical and Arabian

authors knew how to use the art of grossness. For my share, I question whether *anything* is gross; if so, how can it possibly have got to be so, since to God nothing is gross nor thin, but "thinking makes it so"; and whether people in the future will consider anything indecent. Is *shame* an evolution? If shame is at bottom nonrational, and if Evolution is a movement toward the absolute of rationality, I cannot understand that shame is an evolution; certainly, the French have less shame than we. Once, if you had told me that in your view human shame is not an evolution, I should have disdained your mentation; but now, become more utterly mistrustful of my conclusions, I am become quite unsure as to whether it is an evolution or a survival from brutal moods of Life. Decidedly, dogs have lots of shame, "elephants more shame than men" (Tolstoy): which would scarcely seem to lead to the conclusion that shame is an evolution. Heaven knows! and the well wherein truth dwells. However, I do seem to perceive that our whole feeling in respect to sex in Europe, due no doubt to the necessity of the use of clothes in our cold countries, is more or less *outré*. Sophocles, questioned toward the end of life as to how he was now affected toward the delights of love, gave answer, "Softly, friend, most gladly have I escaped from those delights, as from some angry tyrant". But peace is not life! life is nicer than death: "life is sweet", sweeter than sleepiness and peace: so of the absurd things ever said this may be the worst—

that bad eyes are better than sight, the absence of a sense than the blessing of it: for a sense is an insight, a pining wight wiser than a full wight, since he spies in food a beauty to which the full is blind, a sweet heart wiser than Lucretius, since he can descry in his dear a bliss which a billion eyes are deprived of the wit to spy. Old folks, in fact, are no good, and tax no land: hence of France there is greater hope than of England, where the givers of laws are grey, about to go up to the Lords at the order, "go up, thou baldhead". But a land to be gallantly grappled and peopled has to be grappled and peopled by carls raging between the ages of sixteen (like Hastings's father) and thirty-six, or by the few wing-footed Hermes, who, having learned the little hither to acquired of the Science of Bliss,¹ enjoy at forty

¹ If my Recipe for Bliss is of any interest, here it is and perhaps I, more than another, if I may say so in the lowliest tone, have right and diploma to prescribe in this, owing to the delightful life and paradise-below that it has been granted to me to live—caravans of musk from Khoten, and opium of Abou-Tige so that I often say that if ever gumboil and sorrow drop upon me, I will still love God a bit for the long bliss I have gotten of Him, pondering with Job, "I have gotten good at the hand of God", or again, as I shout to Aurora, running with both my legs without any gout about them, "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits", or I say again, "Truly the light is good! and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun" Nor do I a bit hold the view of Job's and Cuvier's definition of man as a "troubled" animal—troubled indeed he has been, but need no more be troubled I myself when fifteen was plagued with a gumboil three days, and whatever noise and protestation a human boy could make you may be sure was then duly made by me, but since then that Hand, perhaps fearing a repetition of the same scene, has seen fit to prevent me from anything that one may name a pain During which immunity I may say that I have grown to this true greatness, that "having the fragility of a man, I have got, too, the security of a god" (Seneca), having "ground every fear beneath my feet, the grim brow of destiny, and the growl of hungry hell" (Virgil)—my true greatness, have I said? but I should say the true greatness of my Age, the first Age which has attained to

all the bouyancy and jauntiness of boys But on this subject nothing but a faint modification of consciousness is at present possible to us; and this we

world-imperturbability, in consequence of that certain knowledge which it has acquired that God is good to Life, whereas, as to the ancient ages, I hold with La Rochefoucault where he holds that "the calm of the sages was an art which they had to veil their agitations". for the ancients were a *kind* of savage, and "the life of savages is an affright". Calm, then, and then music: for I presume that I have known more cosmic blisses during ten minutes in meditating upon the melancholy melody of a piano being tuned in a room above me on a tempestuous day than many men in many months, or in thinking on palaeolithic flints, cave-dwellers, lake-dwellers; or in reading, as recently, this sentence, "History tells us that in olden times nine queens sat on the throne" (in Japan), for the realisation of space or of time, especially of time, pours over my soul a fainting rapture of the most potent opium, the most ravishing hashish Ah, the obscure musics that my heart has psalmed—moon-funerals dishevelled, brawlings of Baal-orgies, bodings, Obiah-blasphemies, breast-beatings by Babylon-streams, threnodies of Redeemers cosmic-dreaming on their cross so that I have felt that I must be the singer-ape *par excellence* in the human wood, that never man sang as I sing within me Or do many men anon so sing? nay, anon, every man? but are less apt to blab their raptures than a prattler of my pattern Well, then, if that is so, I assert that it was *well* that the world was created, and the generations of the geologic ages raged in sorrow, and, if it is not so, still I assert that it was well that the world was created, that one of men in the reign of time should worship his Maker with so wild a sincerity These words "wild sincerity", by the way, probably owe their appearance here to the circumstance that but four days since I dropped across them in a diary, wherein under the date April 9th, I had written "I am a little bit, but accept my hymn this morning, and this wild sincerity of my heart", seven days later, in reference to that April 9th, I find the entry, "Oh, mon Dieu, quelle joie ce jour-là", and, if it were demanded of me why so much joy on that day, I could but answer that it was a very boisterous wild day on the banks of the Wye this worship of wind—which to me is the worthiest of the works of God, as fog the ugliest, which I worship as the Persian the sun—I having learned when a nipper of ten in the West Indies, where, as you know, it is hot, yes, but anon there blow hurricanes that raise a body's hair like a ghost with their gloomy mood, and about Christmas, too, gales of a delicious chill come to blow and mouth about one's brow—bleak! bleak!—of a morning, when one walked to bathe in the sea Was I aware that those gales came to me from England and the Glacial Sea? I forget. I know that they spoke to me of the moon, of moons that no telescope ever explored; and if I possessed a thousand pens, and ten thousand mouths to tell, still, heaven knows, I'd be far enough from uttering

will acquire in remembering that only a tone can be indecent, and that, even if it were otherwise, writers are not to be guided in regard to this or any matter by the smiles and wraths of Kensington: they are so proud. Now, a marquis is proud; prouder still a king; prouder still an arch-priest: but lordlier far than tsar, or shah, or arch-priest, is the sort of carl I am talking of: for his pride is not a pseudo-pride like a duke's, insecurely massed upon fantasy and sham, a bladder that any chance or brashness of the rabble may shatter; but his is a pride established upon the rock of facts, upon a modest and scientific knowledge of his brain and culture as compared with the brains and culture of different kinds of being, of the king, the Hottentot, the gorilla, the

half of all that their holy psalmodes told to me Or do I look in this a little insane—and your broker a little sane? Where lunacy is bliss, 'tis folly to be on 'Change! But nothing, be sure, is grosser than that delusion that "great wits with madness often are allied". Were Goethe, da Vinci, ever in a mad-house? No: so that that Italian professor, in marrying genius with madness, might have seen to it that his madmen were really geniuses, and if any of those queer-headed people like Byron, Tasso, Alfieri, Cowper, Wilde, Verlaine, Savage, Lee, Shelley, and the rest, were geniuses, then let me be a man-in-the-street Genius, as it appears to me, I will furnish you with a definition of in one word—numbleness, in another word—virtue, in another word—vigour, in another word—health, in another word—eye-sight; in another word—interest, in another word—consciousness; in another word—life, in another word—bliss. all which different words, in my dictionary, have scarce a shade of difference in meaning so, if I think that I am a genius, and one wished to know of me for what reason I think so, my answer would be: because I haven't a club-foot! since a good man can no more have a bad leg than a good bedstead can, because, moreover, my mother, seventy-four years old, has not one hole in one of her teeth; because I, over seventy old, can run six miles with sprightliness, and, standing on this planet, can with my mind climb the Matterhorns of her satellite, and scramble through bramble on Mars. Thirdly, then, after calm and music in the bosom, what ought in truth to be firstly, health and strength—all of them matters of habit.

dog: a *real* pride, a *real* humility. If, then, our reverend gentleman novelists ever venture to be shocking (they know their trade-dodges too thoroughly for that, I take it), let Kensington play the censor on them, and it will do well, I think; but artists do not know their trade too thoroughly for that; they, naturally enough, venture; with an effort of venturing so paltry, that how any mortal with a heart in him can call it "venturing" I can't say; and, indeed, I know not how it is, but recently it has begun to seem to me that everybody I meet is getting quite fearful and retreating, as though the race of brave men and heroes had ceased to be. Or is this only my fancy? Anyway, if we don't crave to have the angels and the very jackanapes cackling cachinnations at Kensington, let us not be sweeping away the indecencies of the poor Job, and of all the psalmists and the bards, in whose tone the artist harps to us. So much, then, as to this.

3. Writers, and, I fancy, minds of any strength in general, cherish a natural dislike for adjectives: so that when we see "he was a tall, dark, handsome man", we may reflect, "Here is a fellow not Homeric". You may know Voltaire's *mot*—"the adjective is the enemy of the noun, even though it agrees with it in gender and number"? Well, this is true for, if you say "the blue sea", you tell not more, but *less*, than if you say "the sea", since, if you say "the sea", I think of something blue and vast and awful, but, if you say "the blue sea", I

think only of something blue, and that confusedly. Poetry apparently bears adjectives, or is supposed to, more patiently than prose—*why* I don't know; certainly, if I was composing verse, not one more adjective should prattle in it than when I am composing prose: and, as a matter of fact, the greater poets—most of the Greeks—Homer—flee an adjective like plague: for though the adjectives in Homer, if counted, might amount to thousands, they are such old-coat adjectives—like “many-counselled Odysseus”—that they sound as one with the noun: as in “dear little thing”, where “dear little” has hardly a dash of an adjective in its disposition, and can't be called two. As for *two* adjectives before one noun, I doubt if that could be found in Homer—many twos in Milton, who, however, puts one before and hides one behind the noun, and I know of one *three* in Homer, but so wittily arranged as not to be enraging like “tall, dark, handsome”. As for the Jehovist, Job, it may be said that they won't have an adjective for any money, though in the Jehovist passage which I quoted there appear two, “few and evil”, but those are not the cumbrous kind that huddle the noun behind, combust and drowned. Naturally, it is never a facile thing to express images without adjectives, to tell that one is tall without saying “tall”, but the whole business of Art is a cark and difficulty, and it has to be done in some manner, if that result of *naïveté* of tone, that plain grace of face of the

monuments of Greece is to be got; but at present England sits afflicted beneath a very cataclysm and plague of adjectives, like fleas in Egypt! "Thou fool", said Jesus, and that's strong; but a modern Englishman can no longer say that, he must say "thou damned fool", which is by so much weaker as it is fiercer. In that passage from the physician which I quoted you—"cats of character and imbecile cats, but all bore a *strong, though faint*, resemblance to a typical cat"—why could he not have said "all bore a resemblance"? but, no: he must have an adjective, any adjective, nay two, and between the two what a cropper the excellent doctor cropped. Even intellects of no little vigour have got this odd disease, as in that marvel of Carlyle's, "The body lies on the steps; the head is off through the streets; aloft on a pike"—the correct quotation is, "The *bleeding* body lies on the steps; the head is off through the streets; *ghastly*, aloft on a pike". But why "bleeding"? "ghastly"? Can the raggedest reader keep from conceiving that cat's meat bleeds and is ghastly? So in this little bit you find two superfluous words, adjectives, from a mind that had a natural dislike of adjectives. So much, then, as to this.

4. It seems rather a mad thing that one should need to get a little Latin in order to read English well; but that is rather so: for English writers, Milton, have a way of hurling out words with an eye to their Latin sense; nay, English writers never write a word of this kind unconscious of its essential

sense: for if one writes "ponder", "attention", in his mind is "weighing", "stretching to", so that his writing is one mesh of hidden metaphor, which we miss, if we do not know. So much, then, as to this.

5. Let us not be annoyed if at a few points we are foiled of following our writer, his ineffable philosophy, flight, and highest trebles, nor use of him such terms as "incoherent", "turbid", the words which a Basuto would use in listening to the tutti tumult of a symphony of Beethoven, or to the tongue of Gabriel in mid-air scattering a madrigal to the galaxy, all glossolalia and Chaldean: it is for *us*, if we desire to love his loveliness, to acquire the way of rising to what is lovely in him, yielding ourselves to the wooing and bent of his leading; then it will be well. For, after all, we may as well learn to respect our writer, who, if he is worth our attention, must be of a kind of better birth than Mike and Bertie. Let us refrain from despatching him little letters of praise and patronage with that familiarity of village rectors: the Divinity gives him ditties; October blows console him; Boötes soothes him. Nor let us send him little vicar letters of censure and suggestion: *he* knows, *he* knows. I know, indeed, that in this country it is not easy to respect the penman: for though we may not consider that notorious Victorian, Marie Corelli, exactly a *littérateur*, there is still the impression that such ladies have some sort of connection, or relation, with the art of literature. But, then, that is not so: for, in fact, so far as Alpha Centauri is solitary and

tossed from Sol, millions of millions of miles, so far are individuals of this kind from having any part in the art and craft of letters. Let us raise, therefore, our respect for the writer to at any rate the level of our respect for the violinist, the painter, whose brush, I think, you would be charmed to rush to pick up, as Charles V picked up Titian's. And our writer more merits our bribes and smiles than these, if only because his technique is more a torment to master. See me here at this moment composing with a complete, though low harmoniousness, and with a nearly complete ease—conscious of each consonant and of every (accented) vowel-sound of my outlay, without fail remembering them everyone, as the swain bears safe in his brain the faces and tale of his ewes, using an alacrity of consciousness comparable to that of an acrobat or conjuror astonishing some mass of men, of a mathematic (successfully) tackling the job of some very complex problem, writing and riding this English language with the gallantry and wrist of the charioteer of the Roman amphitheatre as he drove his street-breadth of rebel steeds; and though I speak of "a nearly complete ease", that is the result of some forty years of practice that, applied to the piano or the violin, would certainly have turned me into the most perfect virtuoso that the world has heard; then, too, I have but a week or two ago completed a harmonious book, but after some months, may be, if I begin another, harmony will again be to me quite awkward and hard. Respect

me, then. And I have not said all, I have not said half of half. For the violinist's technique, though easier than mine, is quite half of his art, while my harder technique is not nearly half of my art, which far more positively, more insistently, more fruitfully, than his, consists in enlarging your consciousness of the truth of things. Let us respect, then, them of this kidney, our priests and kings after the order of Melchisedec, our real priests, great kings, gallant and gladsome and glorious, long to reign over us—whether we want it or not, whether we know it or no.¹ Yet we are right, I think, to respect our pianist, and in time will arrive at doing this to our writer, too, since our will is ever right, and our ignorance guiltless. So much, then, as to this.

¹ What, by the way, is a priest? A *presbus*, or elder. And what is an elder—essentially? He is one who "knows more" than children. So, then, a priest is one who *knows more* than the people, has more knowledge, or science, or consciousness. And the priests of the ancient ages really fulfilled this definition. And the real priest of this age—the knower, the scientist—still fulfils it, the *Arch*-priest, more scientist than scientists, more knowing, being the poet of the type of Goethe, because he, his loins girt with all their knowledge, is more conscious of the music, romance, in the truth of things, and so is the real Pope of the real priests. Every other species of "priest", or elder, appears to be nearly ready to disappear.

IV

ON SCHOLAR-ARTISTRY

(The Writings of Arthur Machen)

OF LIVING people known to me none I think more, so, essentially the artist as Machen—meaning by this a singer somehow of the truth that the universe is bacchic and deserves an emotion, a truth which the universe itself is in a conspiracy to conceal from us, and keep us dull. For we see nothing as it is. That “inverted Bowl” that “coops” us in—no bowl there, the stars are not little, nor the moon a foolish cheese, now whole, now cut, that floats dull—in truth, her speed is as lunatic as herself; a tree inside is a Wall Street all teeming with feet that speed, and to see the scapings of a petal through a microscope is to descry trains of trucks pressing with preoccupation on their way, the whole thing trilling like fiddle-strings, singing like fiddles, every millimetre of ether trilling between here and the Pleiades, light flying, suns thundering, some colliding with fuss and fume, moons undergoing “disruptive approach”, pitching into puddles of pit-fire; as I write, wireless waves are rushing in every direction through my hand and heart, but I do not see them, feel them,

and oh, wretched man that I am, who shall rescue me from the blasphemy of being bored? Every thing in the conspiracy of secrecy!—except perhaps meteors, streaming flags of fire that the gallant planet flies in her flight, which do reveal a little how things are, with what a laugh she flies with me. But even these I do not half see as they are, and dull I should be, if the scientist did not arise to tell me “the universe is bacchic! bacchic!” But the notes of exclamation here are mine: *he* has no time, is too preoccupied with seeing to feel, and here is where the artist comes neatly in to rescue me, he having heard what the scientist says, having time, too, to admire, and to tell of it in innuendoes, with winks, saying: “It is not dull! *I* know a thing or two, *I* know a bank whereon the wild thyme grows!” And if one asks him “But is that all?” he winks at one, saying. “Enough said; I give you a hint. eye has not seen, never heart fancied; tolling melodious notes, wrung with emotion, it rolls; fairy! drunken! enough said.” But is it *true*? Fairy? If it is a fancy, then it is not of the least interest or importance; but the scientist says “yes, a fact”, and the artist with streaming tears calls God to witness it. The scientist’s part in art, however, is not seen by Machen, who conceives that art preceded science, that “poetry has nothing to do with scientific truths”, does not, in fact, quite know what science *is*, thinks that the fact “A loves B” is “a scientific truth”, so does not know that science is the *mother* of art—or, say, *does* know, but does not

know that he knows: for art, he says, is adoring; but, then, before adoring one, obviously, must be conscious, must know something, something of an order of things; and to know anything of Order is science; to know more is to adore more. But Machen is of the scholar-artist type, the Milton type, with a remembering habit of mind, not of the scientist-artist type, trained in perceiving, of this type the sole representative so far being Goethe, whose like, when next he comes, will renew all things—such as Wells, Verne, being just shadows cast before his coming. But for the scholar-artist type see Machen who quotes with approval Rossetti's remark, "I neither know nor care whether the earth goes round the sun"—which is the first remark that a cow would make between two chews the moment it got the gift of speech. Characteristic of Machen is his *Hieroglyphics*: "the gold of that land is good"; but not its "licence of affirmation", its lack of that wariness, circumspection, or *scepticism* (*spec=scep=* look—before you leap) to which only scientific training educates the intellect. His theme is the artist's theme that "the universe is bacchic, and deserves an emotion", but he makes certain unexpected exceptions in emotion!—high art, he thinks, does not weep at the universe, nor laugh at it, only sighs at it. He distinguishes between "feelings" and "emotion", though, of course, there is no such distinction in psychology: "feelings" are emotion. If one sends to a woman a telegram "your husband

is dead", and she weeps, is *that*, he asks, fine literature? But, evidently, this bacchic mood, this weeping at the universe, is due to the woman's belief that her *own* husband is dead! If I can make her weep at the universe by a *tale* of, say, Hector, of someone else's husband, in whose existence she does not believe, how high my feat, and fine my "literature"! But he is full of "opinions", biases, idiosyncrasies, resembling that fat Dr. Johnson who struck with his stick for luck every rail of every railing on his way. Half of the universe he loathes; the other half he clasps with passion to his heart: and his favour is often favouritism, his hate is often prejudice: it is not easy to predict what he will kiss, what hiss at. Nor does he ever undergo change the mountains shall dissolve, but he will be found the same. There are those, who, if ever they caught themselves thinking as they thought six years before, would be killing themselves; but Machen is too delicious to be different. And he argues; anon he is even Socratic: and his pretty bubble of argument can as easily be pricked by an intellect really modern as any of the good Socrates': indeed, in tone of soul and mental outfit he is very like Plato. He lays it down that "literature is the expression of the dogmas of the Catholic Church"—and one may think for a moment that he means it; but not he: he means something, something *true*, but not what he says. He says "Rationalism may say to you: Either give a reason for going to Mass, or leave off going; you have only to answer:

But I can give no reason for liking *The Odyssey*, and yet you admit I am right in liking it. then I have proved the contradictory of your premises." And now he is quite satisfied; the enemy is crushed. But, then, there is no parallelism between "going" and "liking": the parallelism would be between *liking to go* and *liking to read*. One may "go", not for pleasure, but to "get good", or something: and the Rationalist says "know why". And so on. But it is not for arguments that one reads Plato: he cannot argue, since the ancient brain was not wary enough, trained in scepticism, strong-kneed, enough, except when, like Euclid, it argued on schoolboy themes. Yet one reads him spellbound, as one reads Machen, and the heart dances. There are creatures that cannot run, but can fly. When Matthew Arnold spoke of "that victorious brow" (of Shakespeare), that, of course, was Victorian, since Shakespeare had no brow—except in his portraits, in which he vainly emulates Hall Caine. Newton had a brow, Edison. which said, it is evident that Shakespeare had none, for, if so, it would have thought something; and what did it think? we can say at once what Edison has thought, but what Shakespeare had was a warmth, a wing—was no Goethe, who had brow *and* wing; but either by itself is worshipful, and wing without brow will frequently by some luck come cutting into the very thickest of truth. Thus it can easily be shown that the soul of *Hieroglyphics* is true, with a truth on which Machen's books in general are

founded. I think the purest Machenesque is *The Chronicle of Clemendy*; such as *The Great God Pan* and *The Three Impostors* perhaps showing some trace of Poe, of Stevenson. In none is aught of "common or unclean"—though it is amusing that when he is most elevated, just then "the general reader" conceives that he is rioting in "improprieties". But, in truth, his theme is ever the Rose, the Rose: even in his letters, for as I write, I reread an old letter that teems with "the Rose"; and though I do not know exactly what Rose he is talking about, I know that there *is* a Rose—of Sharon—and that *he* knows about it, for his garments smell of it, and his pages. This is how he talks. "The longing peculiar" (unwary!) "to man, which makes him lift up his eyes, looking across the ocean for certain fabled happy islands, for Avalon that is beyond the setting of the sun": so that the fellow dances mad, he is stung by the tarantula, he loves God, is afflicted with glossolalia and the gift of tongues, weave a circle round him thrice and close your eyes with holy dread, for he on honeydew has fed, and drunk the milk of paradise.

V

OF WRITING AND SCIENCE

AN OBVIOUS difference between modern literature and that of the past is that the modern is more or less modern—i.e., scientific—in *penchant*: such words as “Oh, earth, what changes”, etc., “Man now is first”, etc., would hardly have been written much before they were; nor is it *that* fiction which is ostensibly scientific—*The Coming Race*, *A Voyage to the Moon*—which is most imbued with the modern mood, but rather such as *La Terre*, *Ghosts*, etc.; and some trace of the same spirit would no doubt be found in any novelette.

But this preoccupation with the science of the moon, the sea, heredity, evolution, Mars, stars, is not owing to the writers being themselves scientists: but they have heard a rumour of Science, and been fascinated. The writer's trifle of science is still acquired at his fireside, or from an omnipresence of science in the air: which, of course, is not to be a scientist, science being an acquaintance with the ways in which forces act, nor can acquaintances be other than personal, since one cannot feel with

another's fingers. But so much is it ignored that it is personal experience of the cosmos which makes a scientist, that the scientist *par excellence*, the craftsman—the smith, pattern-maker, instrument-maker—is not even *called* a scientist in ordinary talk: for this word “scientist” has, as Huxley pointed out, got a quite grotesque glamour in many minds, as though “the scientist” was concerned with a different cosmos from the blacksmith's cosmos—a glamour which would have been pretty foreign to the comprehension of craftsmen like Galileo, Newton, Papin, Huyghens.

Nor was it only such as Newton, with his “aforesaid Glassworks”, who were firstly workmen; but, as Ruskin knew, the artist, too, was firstly a workman, a scientist, so that between “art” and “craft” was hardly any difference, and men spoke of the “mysteries” (i.e., the science) of a craft as many now think of the mysteries of the “scientist's” activities. Handicraftsmen like Amati, Stradivarius, were typical musicians; while every Dürer or Botticelli had his own “wrinkles” as to tempera and impasto, was an adept *capà pie* in the science of the craft of colours, and regarded the drawing of curves and the laying of colours as a craft quite like the fiddle-maker's curvings, the sign-painter's colourings—hence Giotto's circle as proof of his artistry. Nor was literature less a craft than lute-making—“men of letters” being craftsmen, not in words, but in letters, in the rhyming (i.e., repetition) of letters, like “studies in chords”

on the violin, or the stringing of Venetian beads in pretty patterns.

But though every artist is a craftsman, a scientist, the craftsman as craftsman is more exactly a scientist than the craftsman as artist, being subject to tests more crucial and rhadamanthine, and so is more trained in the essentially scientific trait—that level-headedness or hard-headedness, which in Saxon we call “awakedness”, “awareness”, or “wariness”, in Latin “*circumspection*”, in Greek “*scepticism*” (scep=spec=look—before you leap). The violinist and violin-maker are both handworkers; yes, but the violinist may anon commit a faulty double-harmonic, and live, the violin-maker may not make a faulty cut, nor stray from Nature’s rigour as regards his glue or varnish, his arch of bridge or belly, the dash and charm of his scroll, the perfect curving of his purfling: for here no self-conceit, no fame, nor fancy, avails him: for sin he is mulcted. Such men know wariness: no anxious general on the brink of battle, no Perrin measuring Brownian movements, nor Ramsay weighing the tenth of a cubic millimetre of emanation, is of a warier strain. Hence we have those little wrist-watches . . . They contain a hair-spring—evanescent as a poet’s fancy! and very truly poetic, since “poetic” means “making”; there is a balance-wheel on the escapement, made by welding two minute semicircles of brass to semicircles of steel (to evade temperature-changes), a thing, really, that an angel might deign

to mention in Heaven as a *chose vue*, returned from journeying among the suns.

But this wariness, and this inventiveness, are the very traits which the writer, above all artists probably, requires. His trade is to invent. But to invent what?—fictions that look true, that *are*, in some sense, true, so that the word "create" may not ineptly be applied to his highest efforts. But unless he be trained in wariness, is a veteran in the truth that Truth is in a well, has again and again failed, visibly, six times in ten, in attaining Her, his inventions will not be truthful, but will be tumbling into every sort of obvious blunder—if not obvious to everyone like himself, at any rate to every cabinet-maker, to everyone having a wary habit—and he will be tumbling into a thousand other blunders, not obvious to anybody, smaller failures in truth, the avoidance of which would have hoisted his effort to perfection of excellence—if there is truth in the statement that "beauty is truth". Take our Shakespeare, our Milton: in that "*dì parlar sì largo fiume*" (of Milton), how many unwarinesses on a page which no carpenter could away with! In the case of the Trojan War, we have (in general) what can be imagined by man, man being what he is: it is therefore a fiction founded upon fact, but from the first the War in Heaven fails to work—cannot be imagined, since it was "the Omnipotent" whom Satan "durst defy to arms", Satan being an intelligence who could "wield these worlds and all their elements", whereas a horse's

intelligence is too high to try to stop a train, to say nothing of an infinite train. Or did Satan not know that the Omnipotent was omnipotent? In that case, Milton knew something which hosts of superhuman intelligences did not know—which is foolish. Therefore Satan knew, and did not fight. "Nor did the Omnipotent fight," our carpenter would say, "he need merely have sneezed, and everything would have been nowhere: therefore there was no war." And, if there was a war, Satan should never have invented guns and gunpowder: the mind of a trained boy instantly spies that anything invented by the Chinese would never be a trillionth part tricky enough for intelligences so hugely superhuman. Guns that shot off hot balls, not even T.N.T. shells. And none of the Omnipotent's side was hurt! So did the balls hit no one? Or, hitting, not injure? In either case the intelligence of the shooters, who did not foreknow such a result, was little angelic. And so on: not much of it could have been written by an intelligence a little trained in wariness.

As to Shakespeare, he must have been something of a craftsman as a practical playwright, as an actor, nor do we find him tumbling into obvious blunders on every page—though blunders, we may be sure, are there, obvious or not, and many are the obvious blunders, the footprints of the child, the ancient, to the modern eye, frank as the track of the pterodactyl in Triassic sands. Take as an example at random the passage of him that is perhaps the most

celebrated, Hamlet's "to be, or not to be". Of this passage Macaulay of the Philistines says, "'To be, or not to be' has merit undoubtedly as a composition. But its merit as a composition vanishes as compared with its merit as *belonging* to *Hamlet*. This is perhaps the highest praise that can be given to a dramatist." As to its "merit as a composition", this is low: and nothing can better illustrate how hypnotic is the common view, how deep the disease of an eye infected by an epidemic of opinion, than that Macaulay thought well of its "merit as a composition": for ill would it have gone with that Mr. James Montgomery, the poetaster, at the hand of Macaulay, if Montgomery had ever written any such thing as "taking arms against a sea"—and so on: it was dashed off anyhow in haste, with some *cutré* words, "fardel", "quietus", put in to make it sound nice! as all boys do. (This criticism, however, is *by the way*: for here some reader may differ from me; and I am not in this place making connoisseur criticisms from which someone may differ, but I am making such criticisms as a pattern-maker would make, criticisms of blunders, as in the case of Milton, from which it is impossible for anyone to differ, unless someone is unreasonable. Yes, but, says Macaulay, though its merit as a composition is not high (since it "vanishes" when compared with something else), it has this highest merit, that it is so special to Hamlet. But it is not special to Hamlet. Plato said it. I have heard a slattern in a slum call

to another that she would "do for herself, too", only she was afraid of "what may come after"—a thought common to Humanity, that life may fly its carks in the nepenthe of death: "to die, to sleep": but, then, "perchance to dream"? still perchance to experience phenomena? out of the frying-pan, perchance, into the fire? It is the universality of the sentiment, maybe, that has made the passage so famous, not that it is special to Hamlet. And not only is it not special to Hamlet, but (now I no more speak *by the way*) the fact is that any man who ever lived might have said it—*except* one man: Hamlet. To *him* it was impossible, since he, alone of men, *knew* that there is dreaming after death, could never have said "*perchance to dream*" after his long gossip with a ghost, who had quite gone into details about the dreaming ("purgatorial fires", etc.) In fact, "*perchance to dream*", etc., are *mots d'auteur*: it was Shakespeare, *not* Hamlet, who wished to say it, and, in his eagerness to say it, Shakespeare put the speech into Hamlet's mouth, forgetting that Hamlet *knew* that a man may hold converse with a ghost—a thing in Nature so much more odd and momentous than X-rays, that to Hamlet's last day it must have remained the central fact of his consciousness, nor ever thenceforth could his utterances have failed to reflect his consciousness, his perfect certainty, of it, much less show doubt of it, much less *contradict* it ("from whose bourne no traveller returns").

But if Homer nods, and Shakespeare snores, if

Dante talks in his sleep, and Milton walks, this is only what we may expect: the brain till lately was not very awake or wary—a fact which we could readily deduce, supposing we had no direct proof of it: for since wariness and inventiveness are but the two faces of the same medal—wariness a sensitiveness as to untruth, inventiveness a sensitiveness as to truth—the wariness of a mind must be a measure of its inventiveness, its inventiveness of its wariness, and since the ancients invented little, i.e., were little inventive, we could be sure without proof that they were little awake or wary. To blunder, then, was their nature. what is more astonishing is that modern writers should tumble into blunders similarly obvious, through not being trained in the wariness of craftsmen and “scientists”. Thus H. G. Wells, our scientist-writer *en titre*, went obviously tumbling, as in the statement that “there are no bacteria on Mars”—and yet Martians. It is not easy to conceive how vegetation could arise without the microbes of nitrification; but let it arise; it must presently die out when once Mars became covered with dead tree-trunks, which, in the absence of the bacteria of putrefaction, could never decay—and, since no plants, no animals. If animal life could arise, the corpses of a million years would have the seas solid, the land carpeted; and since a whole story is made to rest on this statement, the story crumbles. So, too, *The Time-Machine*: for let one contrive to get over such a fancy as the motion of steel in Time, still,

in no carpenter could the thought fail to arise that, as the time-traveller started forward, he must come to the date of his death: so that all his alleged adventures after are falsehoods. Another romantic tale, on a lower level of fancy, though a higher of imagination, lately read by me, is R. L. Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, in which an eye in the least modern easily sees that some of the events could never have taken place as related; and if, before writing, the writer had waited to become, like his father, an engineer, the tale would no doubt have been still more romantic, since more true. Perhaps, though, I should not make mention of blunders in this book, since I now shun the bore of shewing what they are, the details being lengthy. Let me take some shorter, more important, equally modern piece—say some play. Novels are not often written with a concentration of all the author's available wariness and invention, but dramas are: so, taking a drama, let me take one by a foremost dramatist, preferably one strong in the modern *penchant* for scientific subjects—say Ibsen; let me take his play that is at once most pregnant with his scientific *penchant* and most celebrated—say *Ghosts*: and, if I can then shew that Ibsen, having a pattern-maker's (or a carpenter's) training in wariness, could never have tumbled into the blunders which gash, and, in fact, slay, and lay, *Ghosts*, I shall have established my argument, and shall end.

The story is known; but I may just mention how

to Captain Alving's widow comes on a visit her son Oswald, a painter. The fellow is very unwell, depressed, and pretty quickly he is seeking comfort in the charms of Regina, a Pastor Manders is discussing with Mrs Alving the life of riot of Oswald's father, when Oswald in the next room is heard doing something tender to Regina, whereupon Manders (excited) What in the world is the matter?

MRS. ALVING (*hoarsely*). *Ghosts!* (for Oswald's father had done the same to a servant, Regina's mother).

This ends the First Act.

In the Second, Oswald tells his mother of his state:

OSWALD. Now, I am going to tell you something, Mother.

MRS. ALVING: You are not ill, Oswald?

OSWALD. Do sit still, Mother. I am not downright ill either. Mother, my mind is broken down—ruined——

MRS. ALVING: My poor boy! How has this horrible thing come over you?

OSWALD: That's just what I can't understand. I have never led an unsteady life—never, in any respect.

MRS ALVING: Tell me the whole story.

OSWALD: Well, I will. I began to feel the most violent pains in my head. At first I thought it was the ordinary headache I had been so plagued with. But it was not that. It was as though my powers failed me. At last I sent for a doctor. He set to asking me a heap of questions. At last he said, "You have been worm-eaten from your birth."

MRS. ALVING: What did he mean by that?

OSWALD: He said, "The fathers' sins are visited upon the children."

This, then, is the theme and teaching of the play. the importance of Heredity.

Oswald, however, knows nothing of his father's life of riot; and in the Third Act his mother tells him.

MRS. ALVING: I saw only this one thing, that your father was a broken-down man before you were born.

OSWALD: Ah!

His mother then undertakes to poison him, if he becomes an idiot: and in the end he does.

One of the obvious blunders (by the way) is Mrs Alving's alleged motive for informing the son of the father's debauchery. It is necessary that she should have a motive, but the motive alleged is baseless. She does it, she says, to save him from remorse,

would have him know that the fault is in his father, not in his own way of life. for Oswald had said to her (in the Second Act), "Incurably ruined—by my own heedlessness. Oh, if I could but live over again, and undo all I have done! If it had only been something inherited, something one wasn't responsible for! But to have thrown away so shamefully, thoughtlessly, recklessly, one's own health, happiness, everything . . ." She wishes, then, to free him from these "gnawing and depressing thoughts". But why did Oswald think that the fault was in his own way of life? It was because, when he had told the doctor that his father was an exemplary man (as he then thought), the doctor had been bound to admit himself on the wrong track (as to "the father's sins"), and so "I (Oswald) got to know the truth—the *incomprehensible* truth! I ought to have held aloof from my bright and happy student-life among my fellows. It had been too much for my strength. So I had brought it upon myself". Hence Oswald's remorse.

But, of course, no doctor can be imagined to have said so. A "bright and happy life" is never too much for one's strength, being the fruit of strength, and the source of strength, especially when one is quite "steady": and Ibsen, wanting to cast the whole blame upon the father, had previously insisted upon the "steadiness" of the son. Oswald had said, "That's just what I can't understand! I have never led an unsteady life—*never in any respect*." So when the

author is wanting all the fault to be the father's, he insists upon the son's steadiness "*in every respect*", but when he is wanting the son to be tortured with remorse, in order that the mother may have a motive to inform the son of the father's debauchery, he is unwary enough to forget, or to ignore like the ostrich, the son's "steadiness in every respect", the son's statement that he "*just can't* understand" how the fault can be in himself; and, in order to make Oswald remorseful, is uninventive enough to make a doctor utter a fantasticality which no doctor, nor anyone, ever uttered, a fantasticality which Oswald would have laughed at, and Oswald's mother would have laughed at Oswald for being troubled about, and at the doctor for uttering.

And Oswald's "steadiness"! What a contrast in character to his father!—in a play whose theme is heredity. He has two fathers: his physique he inherits from Alving, his psyche from another father who was the opposite of Alving!

And even here there is blunder: that other father of his could not have been so "steady in every respect" as Oswald pretends: for Oswald was "steady" in gay Paris only, but at home was "unsteady" with Regina, making Mrs Alving exclaim: "Ghosts!"

These blunders, however, are not fundamental in the play, do not rack it to fragments.

Nor do some other obvious blunders in the presentation of the personalities, as, for example, this:

MRS. ALVING: A vale of tears, yes, and we act up to our profession and make it one.

OSWALD: But in the great world people won't hear of such things. There you feel it bliss and ecstasy merely to draw the breath of life. Mother, have you noticed that everything I have painted has turned upon the joy of life? always, always, upon the joy of life?—light, and glorious air, and faces radiant with happiness?

Here the cause of the blunder is probably not so much that the author forgot that Oswald, of all men, never could have said all that, as that he, Ibsen, wished strongly to say all that, and lacked the self-restraint, the wariness and inventiveness, to put the phrases into the mouth of someone in whose mouth they are appropriate phrases. As to Oswald uttering such things—"dir kannst du nicht entfliehen"! Never for *him* was a "feeling of bliss and ecstasy", nor the painting of it, nor even the possibility of conceiving the queerness of state of anyone so alien to him as to feel bliss and ecstasy. He was born with "headaches", born "worm-eaten", saw a headache cosmos through worm-eaten nerves, nor could any herb on earth ever medicine the malady of that damned diathesis. And there are some other such tumbles into blunders not fundamental in the play.

What is fundamental and racks the drama to fragments is Regina, the "splendid": for, with

singular ill-luck, Ibsen everywhere insists upon her "splendidness". "Such a fine girl as you've grown to in the last year or two"; "Isn't she splendid, Mother!"; "How beautifully she is built, and so healthy to the core!", "Mother, when I saw that fresh, lovely, splendid girl standing there before me"; "I saw that she was full of the joy of life"; "Have you noticed how she walks—so firmly and lightly!"; "Regina is so splendidly light-hearted", etc.

The author's motive for all this splendidness seems to be the ordinary motive of the fictionist to make his young women attractive; perhaps, too, he wished to have someone specially attractive as a contrast, and a snare, to a wreck like Oswald, and he takes occasion to make her a bastard of Alving, a visible evidence of Alving's libertinism. But, by a grotesque instance of unwariness, he forgets that she can't be *both* "splendid" and Oswald's half-sister, begot—after Oswald—by the same father who was "a broken-down man before Oswald was born", the cause of all Oswald's sorrows. So the play vanishes: for since a fact paraded in the play denies and derides, sneers and jeers at, the teaching of the play—since he sets out to demonstrate, and demonstrates, that Heredity is everything, and demonstrates in addition that Heredity does not exist—the whole thing cancels out, its sum is zero.

Now, to men of the wary and inventive habit of craftsmen and "scientists" blunders so flagrant are

alien. Let us try to fancy the doom of a mechanic doing his task with this one-eyed half-headedness: he'd pretty soon be blown up, electrocuted, get his fingers off; nor could any experiment conducted with this unawakedness result in anything but messy fingers, a singed beard, an electrostatic shock, a wish to vomit, a feeling of defeat.

VI

ON HAPPY ENDINGS

WHEN WE track any pleasure radically back to its origin, we discover that that origin was the knowledge of some truth; now, pleasure is Good, for when we investigate anything that we name "*good*", we see that by good egg, good man, good God, we mean *au fond* pleasure-giving; if an egg tastes bad, we say "it is bad", "not good"—to eat; but, if we put it into soil, and it causes to come a plum that gives pleasure, we say "it was good"—for that. So, since pleasure is the offspring of knowledge of truth, and pleasure is Good, we can say, then, that "Good is knowledge of truth", or, more shortly, "Good is truth"; as to tales, we can say that "good tale is true tale", and hence we can say "a good tale has a happy ending": for, being good, it is true (to Life); and since *the* truth about Life is that its endings are happy, that there is a happy issue out of all Life's afflictions, here is the theme and emotion of each good tale. Nothing else, indeed, is of real interest to living things, nothing else worth the telling.

That the endings of Life *are* happy we no longer hope, as the ancients hoped, but know, for which

reason it is that religion is a modern thing: for, if I hope that you are good (will give pleasure), and fancy that I love you, my love is fictitious, but, if I *know* that you are good (do give pleasure), I love you really; and the ancients had hardly any knowledge of the goodness of God, but were all more or less compelled to think, what Buddha saw, that "Life is sorrow", what Job saw, that "Man is born to sorrow", and, having nothing but hope in some "pleasure-garden", some "nirvana", to console them, represented Being as a Sphinx, her icy lips smiling at Life's agonies over her grim grill of fangs. And still some of the world's aspects are merciless—earthquakes in Japan, Chilian villages which vanish, "Titanics" perishing, aircraft crashing. But our consolation is no more fictitious, but real, now are we the sons of God, of Reality, and, knowing, are done with faith and hope. The generations of the geologic ages raged in sorrow, and still the millions teem, streaming to crash down over the ocean's cataract and perish, generation chasing generation down, after finding themselves somehow alive, like silly chickens hatched in incubators, knowing little under the dumb constellations, knowing pain, the young lions crying for food, the old lions growling for toothache, every life under sentence of death, destined to stink, to grin, to get to be grotesque, ridiculous—pitiless thing, pitiable—Time like a cannibal cat, *edax rerum*, Eater of them it breeds. Still, it is high drama, star-high, for starlight is the

theatre-lights turned low, the scene is deep in Eternity's depths—it is high doings—wait—it is not for nothing—out of the Eater shall come forth meat. The dinosaur sighed and died out, yes, but if, in dying, it had said, "Though He slays *me*, yet do I trust in Him", that, we now know, would have been well said, for men and birds have turned up; and a day will be in which the Eternal Worker shall have wiped from the eyes of Life all tears but tears of love wrung from Life's broken heart, a day in which Life will say, "It is well that once the muds mothered me, and I fluttered, for wild is this delight of mine in that Might, under the shadow of Whose wing is Life's refuge for ever." And since this is science—for, if it is not science, there is no science, no relying upon experience, and weather forecasts are nonsense—since it is science, we can say that, of two tales, that one which has the happier ending is the best (truest), and if this excludes from the category of good tales some famous "tragedies"—*Othello*, *Ghosts*—that is nothing, if our argument is sound. *Some* "tragedies", though, are good. For, of course, there are two kinds of happy ending: (1) endings happy for the "characters" of the tale; and then (2)—a still better kind—endings happy for the reader, for Society, for Life. Of this second kind an excellent example is *The Bacchae* (of Euripides), or say *Romeo and Juliet*, in which we have tragedy, pretty pitiful, but then comes a happy ending for *us*; *we* get the benefit, since that Montagu-Capulet feud that had

so wounded the Community is soothed to quiescence over the lovers' tomb; and in the end we see that the pitilessness of God is *good*, for there was a happy issue out of all that affliction, as out of the megatherium's shriek of grief, the pterodactyl's tragedy, and the affliction was worth while, since the blessing to many immensely outweighed the bale to a pair of wee people; whereas in *Othello*, which, ending in sorrow, tells no gospel-truth, we get a private trouble not my business, a storm in a teacup, its kite hitched to no star, a novelette—higher than ordinary novelettes, because of the warmth of the author's genius, which breeds in him an impulse to be extraordinary, but lower than ordinary novelettes, because his impulse to be aberrant from novelette type is warmer than wise, ordinary writers being submissive to novelette type, of which happy endings is a right characteristic. How right a characteristic we see in that "old, old story" of Jesus Christ, the best no doubt that was ever told—best since truest, truest since having *both* kinds of happy ending, both *in excelsis*. No lack of tragedy here: gashly the hero dies; but little that matters—the nimble being rises again: sorrow may endure for a night, for two nights, but joy comes in the morning. And he ascends into heaven—a thing most true—not "the descent of Man", but the ascent of the son of Man; in which heaven he lives happily ever after—though he will come once more triumphant, riding the skies, attended by ten times ten thousand knights, with

squalls of psaltery-strings trilling, or with crashing rote of chariot-wheels, and thundering throat. If the tale had been by a modern author, the end must have been spoiled: he, with his modern circumspection, could not have helped demanding of himself "ascend—where to?" If to the nearest star, travelling with the speed of light—the maximum speed of Being—his traveller would be five years flying, supposing that he did not catch his death of cold, to be then frozen to a bone in the zero of cold, before going bony for hunger, if to some far sun of our system, the trip would last fifteen thousand years, would be still beginning; if to the nearest system of suns, a million years. Such considerations would prevent that end from being written at present, but in an age when it could be written, and the details of this deeply true tale credited, it is not strange if it inspired an even wild affection. men died for it. As to the second kind of happy ending, a world is rescued—not a town, as in *Romeo and Juliet*—this world, in which the reader is. At all points, in fact, the tale is transcendent, *in excelsis*: Buddha abandoned his father's throne, but not his Father's throne in Heaven; went forth to poverty, but not to death—and so on. But it is the tale's end that matters, the lizard-linnet victory of issue out of affliction, and lark's-hymn of happiness at the last.

VII

OF HOW TO BE HAPPY

I

"Good", when we reflect, we see to mean pleasant, happy, "best" means pleasantest, happiest—as even the ancients (Aristippus) could clearly see.

But people who are not miserable tend to be content with themselves as they are, not imagining any Good greater than their negative Good, nor desiring to "have life and have it more abundantly", as cats do not desire to be bipeds, nor to listen. But there is positive happiness—height after height—if we *know* how

For Good, Best, consists in *knowing*, and an omniscient being is in bliss, knowing how to procure every pleasure and evade every pain (the *sci* in "omniscient", "science", "consciousness" meaning knowledge).

And any knowledge of order, of what always *follows upon* what, is called Science—not the knowledge that one has a headache, but the knowledge that headache *follows upon* stomach-trouble; and it is easy enough to see that it is this sort of knowledge, knowledge of order—science—which mainly makes an animal happy, which *alone* makes animals in the mass happy. for though *I* get some happiness from

knowing where to find my pipe, Life on the whole gets happiness only from knowing eternal truth, universal order, such as that insulin in a sick kidney is followed by a cure, that a four-cycle explosion in a car is followed by motion of the car

From which we see that the so-called "mystery of evil" is no mystery at all. evil is pain; pain is ignorance, lack of science; and since science is of necessity a *growth*—for there can't be an omniscient monkey or amoeba—this explains the "mystery of evil".

If we now go dancing, then, that is only natural: for evil is ceasing, will more and more completely cease.

The cavemen—Caesar—all the ancients—were in pretty evil case no matches, now, no anaesthetics, dentists, paper, w.c's, motors—nothing much, dullness, carks, apprehensions; everyone "had a devil", seven devils, was a leper, maimed, halt, or blind. their science was so slight

However, not all science is of equal promptness in making happy Darwin spent thirty years in studying worms, caring nothing about worms, really, caring only about happiness, certain that some day, somehow, a knowledge of worms will work to make men happy, but, meantime, he suffered deep pains which he did not know how to cure Spencer, too, had no little science but, if he had known less of other things, and how to cure dyspepsia, he would have been happier.

For we are not *infra*angels, as low types like the ancients and savages find comfort in imagining, but

are supermonkeys, and in simple things is our good and evil. Our hearts will not dance and adore, if we have toothache, or lack food.

That is one thing to know, in order to be happy.

For instance, we are often eating and always breathing, and, if we do these wrongly, we cannot have happiness of heart.

If someone says (like Bernard Shaw) that we do these things by instinct, and therefore rightly, I reply "you don't know what instinct is". Instinct was once reason in some ancestor, who came to the decision to behave in some particular way; which way became secondnature in descendants: and his decision was more likely to be unwise than wise, just because he was an ancestor, low in type. Dogs, for example, are radically wrong, breathing in pants, eating in gulps, so that their jubilant youth degenerates into a shameful old age at fourteen.

And so with many men; they never get a breath of fresh air: for air taken into the lung becomes foul air, and this should be deeply squeezedout by the strength of the trained breastmuscles before the next takein, especially in sleep; but their pant expels but a pinch of it; then the next pant takesin a pinch of fresh air to mix with the foul, so that there is never a breath of pure air in the lung. Such folk soon lose the jubilation of youth: for the air of heaven is a heavenly spirit, all frivolity and holiday, and the organ that inhales the laughter of its life'sparks' flight is the organ of gaiety.

Anyway, there is little difficulty as to breathing strongly: four months, say, of self-training, then never any more: for one is always practising after.

Possibly, my own continued efficiency in breathing owes something to a habit of running, which (like swimming) much strengthens the lungs; and since we cannot run far and fast, the thing is to run far and slow. When one does it thinly clad in March winds, say—flushed, breathing easily, panting only for happiness—it is well then with one.

“I know a man,” says the apostle, “who was caught up to the third heaven, and there saw unspeakable things”; well, I, for my part, know a man who has been caught up to the seventh heaven, there to see things more unspeakable still, as 7 is to 3—or as 7 is to 0: for there is no third heaven (as people then believed), so never the apostle was there, but there is a seventh heaven.

II

Again it is easy to eat wrongly.

For only lukewarm liquids should be swallowed . . . Now, cold things, like water, hot things, like tea, solid things, like plums, do not hurt the mouth, so may well be put into it; but, as they hurt the stomach, and, as the mouth is a marvel of mechanism for warming cold things, for cooling hot things, for liquefying solid things, provided it be given time, therefore it should be given time.

And from its first months a baby should be trained so to eat. In its breast-sucking, Nature supplies it with petty oozes only, but a foolish mother, spoon-feeding it, stuffs it with spoonfuls, implanting into it for ever a habit of haste in eating. Yet, on growing up, if it discovered Golconda, or got to be a Pope, these would be but trumpery lucks compared with having had a mother of some understanding and loving patience.

To some, indeed, it may seem that that must be a bore to eat slowly; but, then, righteousness of life is no bore, but luxury and fun—real righteousness. During a week or two it is a bore to go over from any bad habit to any good but “good” means pleasant—has no other ultimate meaning; and eating first becomes a great good when perfectly done. Now, too, you may say good-bye to “sick-headaches” and suchlike shames for we are well-made, and merely grieve through ignorance.

Nor does eating well occupy much more time, since we are then inclined to eat less; moreover, one gets to know the luxury of eating will never be so green as to eat unless greedily hungry, and this may mean *less* time spent on the whole—two meals being enough (I think). We are meant to eat a certain number of tons in a life-time, and most people eat the whole in sixty years, then die, while the wise take a hundred years to eat it, then die.

Slow, then, and seldom—and silence! For the job of eating with joy and consciousness is enough to occupy all one's attention; but people chatter meanwhile! If I was an entertainer of many, I should make

a law, "No conversation at table". Then meals will become an epicure's sacrament.

And I imagine that *what* one eats is also of importance; but here, though one's ears are wide to hear of "Vitamin D", "unfired food", etc., one is still bewildered. I have an idea that, if we ate only fruit, fresh picked, and ate it well, we might live to be one hundred and twenty, but, of course, this is not knowledge. And whence is the average man in England to get fresh fruit? He actually drinks beer, not made of fruit, and his inspired lawmakers, instead of bribing vine-growers to send him wine, *tax* them, to make him drink beer.

And there is another science that specially makes men happy—the science that makes them religious for, though all science does this, *that* science specially does it which consists in the knowledge of what follows upon some simple, large facts, such as the facts of what we are, when we are, where we are.

To know which facts is the high privilege of modern men, ignorance of them being the reason why the ancients never dreamt what religion is, what happiness is—true religion, high happiness

For they lacked our lowliness of heart, fancying that the universe is little, themselves big, fancying that there is joy among the lords of Taurus in respect of one Tom that repents.

And they were haunted with apprehensions—of death, of hell, of stars "falling", the earth bursting up, graves giving up their dead

We are too little for hell: the Charioteer of Arcturus says "pooh" at our dwarf G sun—one of billions no doubt in billions of island universes, of which a few are visible to our eyepieces.

Nor had the ancient brain the strength to realise the Past, the Future, Eternity; a few years back was "the beginning", while "the end", "the consummation" (*τὸ τέλος*) was expected daily by some. For us the earth's seven thousand million years is a mere click of the cosmic clock, our eternity being ungirt by any beginning; and since "Force is persistent", and there is One whose Name is Force, we know that, though the pulses of these suns will slow, His sea will for ever and for ever flow, His billows will know no end.

In that Deep of Time, if He seek me, He will not find me, He will be deprived of you; but will not repine.

Meantime, by pricking and pressing our spirit to be omnipresent in space and time, we are with Him in that Everywhere where He resides; and there with Him is fairyland, romance and happiness.

III

So, then, in a new universe we are new creatures, having learned Bigness, Littleness, Awe.

And we have learned Love, on learning that men are sprung from Apes, that there is a principle of Progress in Being, by which Life through science climbs to might, and will in time be wildly delighted

—this not being a *hope* and a *faith*, but knowledge obtained by experience in the same way in which we know of the future that next June will be sunnier than next October.

So here is Gospel in reality, glad tidings of great joy in truth! His name was Charles, and his name was Comforter, Prince of Consolation, for we still know pain, but a voice has called to us Love! all is well, be comforted. For, as none before Galileo could suspect that God is great, so before Darwin none could suspect that God is greatly good.

And now we have thrown overboard our "personality" as a phantom having no reality, only One being real, "I" being a thing of atoms that reel in dance, so that during sleep my opinions veer, my nails lengthen, "I" to-day being far from being the same body or mind as when I was embryo, or behaved yesterday: I have changed, am different, and a different thing is another thing. And since millions of changes take place in each thing in each second, "the individual perishes, the world is more and more", the drop is lost in the Ocean.

But the sense of self in the ancients and savages!—amusing souls. "Who follows Anjou?" cries Richard Lionheart, leaping from a ship into the sea to fight a battle, clad like a Basuto "boy" in gawds and gewgaws. What cocks! *I came, I saw, I conquered, I am—the cock.* "Anjou's" father, was "England"—God is *my* right, by jingo! One of them had for motto "Cave, adsum"—look out for yourself,

I am about, swaggering as the African gallant, "Lion of the Tribe", struts and carries on.

We are different—puffs of nothing whirled in the whirlwind of eternal things, universal things. And all this lowliness of ours, this nirvana, this awe, this love that "casts out fear", this true religion, real poetry, this inhabiting of eternity and having our lot in a nook of infinity—all this romance is happiness, on condition that, really modern, we realise the facts.

To realise them, one not being formally "a scientist", one should read about them, and by strong imagining digest them into the mesh of one's everyday intelligence.

The facts are (1) that suns are big; (2) that the earth is old; (3) that men's unlikeness to snakes is slight compared with their likeness; (4) that atoms are smaller than archangels can imagine.

But one who learns that there are other worlds thick as peas does not believe, *know* it, until by familiarity with details he gets the facts into his heartbeats: he should study some astronomy, some biology, some subatomic stuff, some mathematics—there's no difficulty.

Then, waking up, he finds what he is—Nothing; when he is—Nowhen; where he is—in the seventh fairyland of the seventh heaven, sailing away for Utopia on one of these islands of idyll that float areel through the Ethereal Sea; and now he realises that that is not clever to consider Being common

place, just because other Joneses are sufficiently unreasonable so to consider it.

A young man, lost somehow when an infant in a tropical forest, where like Tarzan he had lived solitary, was captured and brought to Paris (in the 1880's), to be studied by the anthropologists, and it was found that his adoration was boundless; when there was a gale his raptures became frantic: he ran, he pranced, he laughed, his tears streamed—as is natural in anyone whose intelligence is fresh and much above a cow's. Perhaps cows, too, are like that, as young dogs, larks, seem to be, and Jones is dull, not because he is weak in the head, but because of the inveterate influence upon him of millions of Joneses, all preoccupied with the strains and stresses of a crazy society, named "modern", but designed by ancient minds of a childish type, so that the Messrs Jones have no leisure to be conscious of other facts; and from them the leprosy of dulness spreads.

For for *goodness*, happiness, one must, moreover, have some "*goods*"—"wealth", in addition to high health and high consciousness: "healthy, wealthy and wise"; and, as to getting *wealth*, or *wellth*, I don't know what to say—except this, that, to be *well* off, Israel must not live in Egypt, nor Saxons in a Norman England a nation must have a country as *we* no doubt would soon have, if we had the gumption to appoint to govern us young scientists, not old lawyer-minds.

However, the big difference between two men is

not that one is a beggar and the other a duke, but that one is dead and the other alive to eye this sight of a world and worlds. On waking from a sleep, I say, "Alive! another day, another palace, built without hands of bubble-colours upon a void of Being; and in all the myriad bits of this mystery and miracle of me not an ache, not one. As to to-morrow, what do I care? If 'I' do not wake again, 'I' will not know; if I do wake, 'I' will be someone else—some one older, too, his blood less flushed with the hormone of piety to exult, and love, and thank, and thank; and Peppy's dead, Ketty's dead, Setty's dead, the lake-dwellers dead, and that old Uruk who built Ur of the Chaldees; but I this day am a thing awake and well: this is my day, my palace." Then I am up, to be an hour naked, exercising every muscle, especially the face-muscles, so as never to look older to myself (for that's bad), letting no muscle stir but the one I will to stir; then to bathe in cold and be anointed with oil; then out to run six miles in cotton shirt, trousers, shoes—nothing else ever; and if there are heaven-high winds way-faring, wetted with drizzle—everything in Eden wet, fresh-made, smelling of eternity, singing the hymn of the earth's journey toward Hercules—then I can't help letting my mouth shout what my soul moans, "Beloved", thanking God that to men at least is given to perceive His meanings, and to be with Him in days and places of Heaven that no tongue may tell of.

VIII

ON WEALTH

THE MEANING of "wealth" frequently seems to be not clearly apprehended.

For example, Frank Varley, Member of Parliament for Mansfield, says (as to a Mines Nationalisation Bill), "The miners are justified in asking that the national wealth (meaning mines) should be nationalised."

But clear concepts, and the use of words with precision, are great gains. A mine, now, is not wealth. *Well* is good, or pleasant; *wellth* (or *wealth*) is goods, or pleasures; but, evidently, a diamond on the ground is no good or pleasure, is not wealth: though, if I *take* it, "do work" on it (as physicists say, i.e., move it), pick it up, a diamond in my hand, in my tie, is wealth.

Coal in a pit is no good or pleasure to anyone, is not goods, *wellth*; though coal in a firebox, in a grate, is. The sea, the land, the air round me, is not wealth; though the air that I have *taken*—i.e., moved—into my lungs is.

Nature is not wealth: wealth is something desirable in Nature taken, moved: it is the taking, moving, that changes Nature into wealth; and the whole of

the wealth in a piece of coal, or any object, consists in motions given to that particular kind of thing: for whereas it was originally no good, it got to be some good by being moved, and where it was moved to it was less good than where it now is, its wellth growing and growing by successive movements.

And the movers of it, the makers of the wealth in it, are the sole owners of it: for only wealth can be owned; "to *own*" means to own *wealth*, to own something that has been moved, and has acquired wellth, by one's *own* force; or someone else may have moved it, and I, through having moved other things by my *own* force, am able to buy it from him, and *own* it. But in every case to *own* is to own wealth. If in the dark I steal something that turns out to be no good to anyone, that is no theft, as, not being goods, it can have no owner.

Nature, then, cannot be owned, only goods can, only wealth—something that has been moved.

We see, then, the absurdity of men being wealthy "by law" through asserting that they own something that, not being wealth, cannot be owned: is it strange if absurdities emerge out of the bowels of communities founded on an absurdity so buffoon?

What is curious is that such "owners" base their absurdity on a truth, referring to the "good old simple plan that they should take who have the the power", this, they say, being the Divine law; and, of course, this is so true, that no other law is even conceivable, moreover, what one takes, they

say, is his, his own, he owns it; and this, too, is evidently so. But they seem to have no notion of the meaning of the word "take", do not realise that, to own, one must really take, not merely say that one has taken.

If one breaks some skulls with battleaxes, and makes a "law", and sets up a fence, sets up a board marked "trespassers will be prosecuted", that is saying that one has taken, but "to take" means to move. If I say to my guest "take some mustard", he may trumpet "Yes!" "Yes!" till his throat's sore; but saying is not taking: to take he must "do work" on it, move it, do something to it.

In the case of a plot of land, it has soil, it has site, it has under-soil—those three: and its soil can be owned by an individual who takes it, i.e., moves it, ploughs it, compresses its particles by building on it (as when we "take" a chair), does something to it, somehow changes it from Nature into wealth—for a while; its site cannot be owned by an individual, since he cannot take it, move it, do anything to it; but it can be owned by a community who takes it, i.e., moves it, moves it from being outside a community to being inside a community, does something to it, raises its rental—motion being Einsteinian, relative, and one may take some mustard either by moving it to one's mouth, or by moving one's mouth to it; as to the under-soil—the earth's lithosphere—the most important of the three—that cannot be taken, moved, owned, by one or by many.

Such, then, is the *bébêtise* of men saying that they own lands of which they cannot take the site or the undersoil, and have not taken the soil, nor have bought the soil, nor have inherited the soil from anyone who ever took the soil!

IX

OF THE NECESSITY OF WAR

WHAT first emerges as a truth relevant to our enquiry is that wars among us civilised are less frequent and prompt than among the ancients and savages: and, if we can see the reason of this, this may furnish a clue to the question whether the process is certain to continue.

Is it that we moderns have become more mild in mood, the warfare of the ancients and savages being an offspring of their ferocity? Or is the ferocity of savages a fancy? The Caribs, for instance, the Incas, were gentle people, upon whom the Spaniards came "like wolves upon sheep"—as Macaulay said of the English coming upon the Hindus; and in honour, too, in heroism, and other moral moods the American Indians seem to have surpassed the Spaniards.

Some savages, then, are not ferocious, and, if all A's have not x, x cannot be a characteristic of A; also some savages are more moral than some civilised, some being Christian, Mahometan, saints; and since there are but the bodily knacks, and "heart", and

head, and the difference between savage and civilised is not in the knacks, save in knack of hand (hawks excelling both in sight, dogs in scent, cats in hearing), and the difference is not in "heart", it must be in head, or hand, or both—in intelligence, and so in knowledge of the cosmos, or in handicraft, or both. Who, for example, are the bravest soldiers? I have heard it asserted that the Turks are, that the Irish are, the Germans, the Japanese, the French, the Cossacks, the English, the Chinese; and some savages have shewn themselves at least as brave as any of these. For "deathless heroism", endurance the most stoical of excruciation, I select the fatalist Hindu—Nuncomar on the scaffold—though some Red Indians, some French aristocrats in '93, some Chinese, some Africans, are hard to surpass in this respect. Hence the harm which those do who boom and hoot examples of moral mood, such as the Balaclava Charge, or that "Birkenhead Drill" which the King of Prussia presented as an example to his men: for, in so doing, they focus admiration upon those things in which savages are not below the civilised, and they omit to boom those things which have lifted the civilised far above savages, viz., knowledge of the cosmos and handicraft: so that Grace Darling becomes more celebrated than Rutherford. But the aim of Nature may be demonstrated to be the development of the brain—even the hand, Her next favourite, being perhaps destined, as some imagine, to be replaced by a mechanical hand; and She gives

the impression of having spent 900,000 years in training men to a moral heredity, merely in order that the thinker's brain may not be much distracted by the irruption of his own and others' passions. Hence with the civilised—at least the highly civilised—the centre of gravity of the man has shifted, and he is as if converted and born again, not of water, but of the intellect, the words "*good man*", "*best man*", no longer meaning, for him, a saint or moral enthusiast like Socrates, Buddha, Marcus Aurelius, Carlyle, Arnold, but a seer, like Faraday, Helmholtz; at the notion of the ancients and savages, that all things work together for good to them that have certain emotions, and walk by charms, he smiles, as at his child's fancies and drawings, at the handicraft of savages, at Napoleon's notion that "God is on the side of the big battalions", knowing well that God is on the side of the big intelligences, and that one inventor may yet be stronger than a thousand million men; "conduct", then, for him, is no longer "three-fourths of life", but a tenth, a more or less subconscious, negligible tenth, since he is carelessly convinced that he, the King, can do no wrong; nor is his cosmos any longer a moral parish, but is large, and electro-chemical: so not grit, but wit, any longer preoccupies him, appearing to him most noble and exemplary, not moods, but perceptions, the spinthariscopes, the 4-cycle Otto, the electrolytic detector, the seer's wit of the phonograph, of the submarine; and his question is not "How shall I *feel*, what shall

I *do*, to be saved?" but "What shall I *think* to further a world, and what shall I *make*?" Moreover, those who boom such examples of moral mood overshoot their aim: for their excellent aim is to encourage such moods; but such moods are not foreign to Man, nor far from the thought of his heart; and those who overlaud them only cause them to be infected with a certain self-consciousness, bravado, below the plane of the simple stoicism of a Nuncomar or Redskin brave. for in conduct, as Novalis says, "the unconscious is the alone complete".

At any rate, since ferocity is not a characteristic of savages, it cannot be that their wars are caused by their ferocity. for, as Prescott shews, even the gentle Incas were generally at war—who permitted their empire to be conquered by two hundred Spaniards: these people's wars assuredly were not because of their ferocity. Only, they knew how to look ferocious when they put on plumes and paints, to prod themselves toward ferocity, like boys who boisterously march and look large, but are not too ferocious *au fond*, Man apparently being not a ferocious animal, but a domestic and slippered soul, until some power rouses and hounds him to prowess upon the war-path.

And, if ferocity is not the cause of savage wars, shall we think that ferocity is the cause of the wars of modern Europeans? That can hardly be: for, on the contrary, the laws, at all events, and manners of the civilised—their garb and garniture—have

inclined toward mildness, fineness, politeness, the very war-paint and horrid busby of the swash-buckler having tended to vanish. This, Buckle fancies, has been owing to the discovery of gun-powder, which created a special class of fighter, and to the discovery of steam, which promoted intercourse—anyway, was not owing to preachers of peace, but to causes universal in civilisation: so the change is universal. Some modern Continentals, indeed, especially the Germans, have deliberately fostered among themselves a certain turbulence and “frightfulness” in the curl of their moustache, like Daimio Japanese; but this seems a mere freak and anachronism of fashion, like Greek gowns under the Empire. Two thousand years ago, in Germany, the shipwrecked sailor was “vogel-frei”—could be seized as a slave, or killed; a thousand years ago his little property, at any rate, could be taken; to-day under the reign of science men stake life and property to rescue and pet him, Huns becoming merely Hunnish, and finally honied, until roused by some power and hounded upon the war-path. Anyway, the truth seems to be that men are not ferocious, that, as the song sings, “We do not want to fight”—until, by Jingo, we do.

For we do. “We are at war with Germany”, as someone, twenty years ago, waking up, insisted¹—driven to it, “for the good of Belgium”, some said, “for freedom and civilisation”, others said, “for the

¹ This chapter was last revised in 1935—J G

sacredness of paper", Lloyd George said, "for our existence" Winston Churchill said—mixed motives. And why did France fight? "For our existence," she said, "for the *revanche*", she said, "for justice, freedom and civilisation." And why did Russia fight? "For our existence," she said, "for Constantinople", "because we were attacked". And why did Germany fight? "Because we were attacked," she said, "for our existence", she said, "for our development", "to spread culture", "to strafe every one"—mixed motives. Everywhere, however, was found one profession—that they fought "*for existence*", which has a truer ring than that it was for "justice", or "paper". At any rate, we may say that it is not for nothing that they suffered, but for something, and, if no group of ten Germans can agree in their analysis of what the something was, nor no ten French, English, then, since they are not ferocious, they, in common with savages, must be pushed toward war by some cause—one bidding as the love of "existence"—a cause dark and wide, which, like all causes, we must call "Divine".

This is the more obvious, because here was no holiday cockfight, but business—gargantuan—nor ever was the gorge of death so chock with flesh. Are men, then, as sands, and offal of Autumn? Or will anyone henceforth utter the phrase, "life is precious"? Indeed, this was ever an empty phrase, bereft of sense, if "precious" meant anything like

rare, as radium is a precious metal: for living beings teem in nearly every cubic millimetre of the sea, soil, lower air, so that coal or copper is most precious in comparison, and, if one kill a million times a billion lives, that makes no difference, a million billions spring in their place. In fact, we know that the will to live and occupy every nook is a rage so furious, that the varieties of life everywhere *press* upon the limits of their means of well-being, and are at war "for existence", so that each would speedily overspread the earth, if its spread were not repressed by some necessity of its environment—"environment" meaning the nature of things as it concerns any variety, not as, say, Sir Norman Angell, in his *Great Illusion*, thinks as regards human varieties, that their environment is "Nature" *outside* Man, which Man's business is to "conquer"—a view of the human race as a non-natural whole in the midst of "external Nature" which is little modern, and is no more to be maintained as to Man than as to birds, whose "sparrow is speared by the shrike", each variety having other varieties of its species that environ it as part of Nature.

Of human varieties, then, as of every variety, that must be a truth what Spencer says: "*Every* variety is perpetually undergoing a variation in number, now rising above the average through abundance of food or absence of enemies, and then, by a scarcity of food or abundance of enemies, being depressed below its average; and amid these

oscillations lies that average number at which the expansive tendency is in equilibrium with repressive tendencies"—a truth that has been called "The Law of Life".

But in this statement of the Law two words call for elucidation—"enemies", and "average" (number). The "enemies" of sparrows may evidently be divided into three kinds: (1) the nature of inanimate things, weather, dearth, size of the earth, etc.; (2) such animate enemies as farmers, cats, etc.; and (3) such animate enemies as shrikes, birds like sparrows. Such are the "enemies" which repress the spread of varieties in general; but the varieties of *one* genus—the dominant genus—must offer an exception: for, since the number of these can hardly be repressed by the dominated genera, their enemies can be of two classes only, viz, inanimate things, and the other varieties of the dominant genus; and, if the Law of Life is to operate in this genus also, then the varieties of this genus must either evade the repression of inanimate things by an adequate increase of knowledge or quality, or they will have their rage to overstep their "average number" repressed by their only remaining enemies, the other varieties of the dominant genus—unless they themselves repress their rage to overstep their "average number".

Now, as regards Man, the naturalist may not be quite prepared to state that *he* is the dominant race: for that race is the dominant which can come upon all others, saying, "I am about to kill, devour,

decompose you"—as Man does to lambs and lions, and as is done to Man and to all by microbes: and, in fact, this race of microbes has everywhere in the past been the enemy which, more than anything, has repressed every tendency of Man to overstep his "average number"—in "Great Plagues", "Black Deaths", when many deathcarts wended, and from dwelling to dwelling went the wailing "out with your dead". αἰεὶ δὲ πνεύει καὶ οὐκ ἔστι θάμνηται. Such horrors, however, no longer happen in our most crowded slums; the dominance of microbes has so toppled, that civilised Man may now roughly be called "dominant": in which case, any overstepping of its "average number" by any variety of civilised men in any stage of knowledge must, if it evade the repression of inanimate things, either be deliberately repressed by the variety itself, or it will be repressed by other varieties of civilised men—a statement necessarily true, if the statement by biologists of the Law of Life is true. Some biologist, indeed, like Mitchell, may see fit to make the suggestion that all other biologists, knowing little of biology, misstate the Biological Law; but this can hardly be regarded as gravely meant; and, biologists apart, it is only necessary for anyone to look within himself to discover that he is conscious of the truth of the law, and this without other knowledge of biology than belongs to housemaids, who quite know that there would be more mice, if there were no cats, and more cats, if kittens were not killed by men, and more men,

if their "average number" was not adjusted by want and war.

But "average number"—what is this? What is the "average number" of the English variety? In 1700 their number was 6,000,000, in 1800 it was 12,000,000; in 1900 it was 45,000,000; in 2000 it will be some 360,000,000 (at this rate). Which of these is its "average", or natural, number?—for here "average" means "natural" or "proper". It is evident that the "average" number was, in each case, something not far from the actual number at that date: for we can be sure that 39,000,000 of the 45,000,000 now in England would have perished in 1700, since the 6,000,000 then had no superfluity of things; nor could those surplus 39,000,000 by their labour have coaxed Nature to produce things to maintain them, for, of their two enemies, we know that one at least—the nature of inanimate things—would have killed them off, in their lack of knowledge of soils and oils, light and lightning, steam and steels; if some did contrive to survive in wretchedness this enemy, they must have survived, since not by their own quality or knowledge, then somehow by the labours and trading of other nations, to whom they would be powerless to pay any recompense; and these survivors must presently have perished, if not by microbes, then, by their only remaining enemy, the other varieties of their species: for, by the Law of Life, there would have been War.

But while Man's behaviour is not less ordered

by natural laws than is the behaviour of rooks and sparrows, the laws operate through men's will and reason: so that when Austria wars with Italy, it is not in order to illustrate some Law, but for some concrete cause of quarrel. Between the WaIngwania and the M'Niami, frequently at war, unconscious of any biologic law, there must be some grievance which can be definitely alleged. What is it? It is to be remarked that they are very separate in their proximity, like a drop of oil hard by a drop of water, like Montagu and Capulet, Jew and Samaritan. A German can come to London, marry a Cockney, open shop in Bermondsey; but, if a M'Niami hunt a haartebeest across the frontier into MoIngwania, it is at the risk of being seen and speared. Yet the WaIngwania owe something to the M'Niami: that newfangled style of grinding groats now the mode throughout MoIngwania is a M'Niami notion; but for M'Niami mountains the flats of MoIngwania would be a misery in the rainy season: it was not the WaIngwania who kneaded M'Niamiland with their hands, and seated her where she is, and seated MoIngwania where she is, serenely screened within those everlasting arms of M'Niamiland: the WaIngwania forget that. And, if part of MoIngwania well-being, MoIngwania wealth, is *owing* to the M'Niami, that part is *owned* by the M'Niami; and, if part of MoIngwania wealth is, then part of MoIngwania land is, for wealth is from land, as finger from hand. But, then, the M'Niami, for their part, forget that

it was the WaIngwania who attracted the Portuguese trucksters to these latitudes with their fabulous buttons and calicos: they forget that, as they forget ten other benefits that they get from MoIngwania. And how they both are multiplying! Perilous thing! Wherever one wanders solitary in forest, one spies a WaIngwania's eye shining like God's behind a bush, watching one's doings. And growing poorer nowa-days: the more they grow in number, the thicker the crowd of their riff-raff poor, and the bigger the peril, for those poor are after land, aye, after M'Niami land. A wise king of M'Niami would strike quick—now while he may—before the WaIngwania and their poverty multiply beyond measure, until the whips of want wallop them to come dancing their war-dance at the M'Niami, who, also, multiplying, tasting scarcity, are after land, aye, after MoIngwania land, that is partly theirs. . . .

And as with savages, so with civilised, whose cause of quarrel, however, operates less goadingly, since our growth of numbers, of poverty, is counter-balanced by growth of knowledge; but a similar separateness here; a similar claim to the exclusive possession of land—frontiers, tariffs, passports, registration of aliens, quotas, deportations, Home Office permits—though it is easy to see that Germany is partly Englishmen's, England partly Germans'. But no acknowledgment of the obvious; no millions of pounds paid by England to Germany for Röntgen rays, which heal Englishmen's diseases; no millions

paid by Germany to England for the steam-engine, to Denmark for unearthing the birthplace of Light, which makes Germans a higher type of Hun; instead of acknowledgment of debt, only growth in numbers by each other's achievements, and threat of invasion. There is cause for quarrel here.

Anyway, we see that "average number" is not some fixed number, but may properly spread beyond measure, on condition that a variety's quality or knowledge keeps pace with that spread; but, by the Law of Life, its number tends ever to grow faster than its quality or knowledge; and, if it does this much, and the variety still contrives to maintain in wretchedness this excess of number over quality, or knowledge, or power over Nature, then, without fail, in the case of a variety of the dominant genus, that excess will be repressed by its only remaining enemy, other varieties of the genus.

And it is to be noted that when quality or knowledge is spoken of, any knowledge resident by chance in some heads is not what is meant: J. J. Thomson and Lloyd George may know that the "ownership" by individuals of a country is the root-cause of its sorrows; or they may know Avogadro's Law that in a cubic cm. there are 3×10^{19} molecules of all gases alike; or they may know that wine, cider, are better for the genius of a people than beer, not made of fruit, but of duller products; but unless this knowledge is diffused, or somehow used by the community, it boots not, it is

not the knowledge of the variety, nor modifies its quality

At any rate, what now appears to have been demonstrated is this: that War is the offspring of ignorance, the ignorance of a great number somewhere, and depends upon a wretched ratio somewhere between numbers and knowledge. And, as, like all sorrows, it is the offspring of ignorance, so it is the medicine of ignorance, decreases ignorance, not merely relatively, by decreasing the number of the ignorant, but, with its two-edged sword, absolutely, by heightening the quality or knowledge of men—as can readily be demonstrated . . . Many, indeed, are the *lesser* medicines of War—not the smallest among them being this, that it creates citizenship. To the soldier in whose head, till then, the idea of the State has scarce arisen, there arrives a moment when he stands wide-awake before death—for the State, which thereupon becomes not less real to him than groans and griefs. Hence history is thick with tales of the reorganisation of States by the home-coming soldier: for he has acquired Cooperation under threat of death; the General is a general servant, the captains are captains of industry in sacrifice, the army is not three millions but one being fighting for its life, and War, the divider, is above all the uniter—of individuals into heptarchies, of heptarchies into nations, of nations with their allies, and at last of allies with the enemy. Nor is it the soldier alone who is thus keenly piqued to the

idea of the State and Co-operation, but the nation: for the most dissolute crowd of individuals, slouching through existence together in a happy-go-lucky slatternliness, must necessarily, if they are at war, socialise, nationalise, smarten themselves a little, in order to be able to expect the smallest success in the combat. Nor is this a solitary effect. "By means of war," as Winwood Reade says—seeming to forget that he is praising, not a good in itself, but the medicine of an evil—"by means of war intelligence was brightened, tribes compressed into nations. It was War which founded the Chinese Empire, linked Babylonia, Egypt, India, planted the Greek language in Asia, united the barons in the Crusades, destroyed the feudal system. United Italy was formed by the wars of '59, '66 and '70"—and so on. Deep have been these, and suchlike, uses of war in the volume of human evolution; but they are as nothing in comparison with the essential working of that drastic purge and scourge, its double-working of lowering the numbers, and enhancing the quality, or knowledge, or power of Man—"quality" and "knowledge" being employed to mean the same thing, since it is obvious that the *quality* of an animal is exhibited in its power over Nature, as its power depends upon its knowledge, since, if the animal knows enough, it can make to itself chariots of flame, watch an atom waltzing, wash in other suns, or accomplish anything whatever, those that eat of that tree being "as gods". But "quality" may be employed in a somewhat

different sense to mean, not "knowledge", but "capability of acquiring knowledge": for, if an animal A has more power over Nature than B, A, at that instant, is actually of the higher quality; but if B is capable of acquiring more knowledge than A has or can acquire, B is potentially of the higher quality. in the first aspect a cat being of higher quality than a baby, but in the second a baby being of higher quality; and it is in this second sense especially that War heightens the quality of varieties, by heightening the quality of births—a statement whose truth may not be obvious at once to all: for "How!", someone may say, "here are our boys, our bravest and brightest, the parents of the future, being devoured by War—can this heighten the quality of births in our variety?" The answer is that the Great Physician is a Surgeon, too; that, if He "works in a mysterious way", it is ever without fail; and, as for me, though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. It cannot, indeed, be denied that when the brow and bright fall, there is a loss of good blood; the guess has even been made that here was the cause of the fall of Rome, whose soldiers are supposed to have been all brow and bright; but, then, this picking of men has not been general—certainly is not the case in the modern conscript army, which, for one brow and bright, contains fifty riff-raff a little better than C 3; and since, before a war, there was more than the "average number" somewhere, every death not only tends to rectify the wrenched ratio between numbers

and knowledge, but, by that very lowering of the claims upon the wealth which the then stock of knowledge can wrest from Nature, every death tends to heighten quality by granting more wealth to survivors, more leisure to acquire a liking for knowledge, and augment its stock: for it is as if blood was "let" from the plethoric, and the brain cleared for activity. But this is far from all: for for every man—brawny and bright or rickety and raff—who is killed in war, a woman, too, is killed by the same two-edged sword—a woman *as* a woman, as a mother, since, with a lesser number of husbands there must needs (where there is monogamy) be a lesser number of wives; and these will be picked wives, the rickety girls being left unselected—a Divine thing: for, as Tennyson well says, "our mothers make us most", giving us "our intelligence" (Schopenhauer), and our height—animals (as stock-breeders know) getting shape from the sire, size from the dam, as men get that in which the civilised do not surpass savages, their character, or moral shape, from fathers, but their intelligence, or mental size and span of forehead, in which the civilised far surpass savages, from mothers. This can be readily demonstrated, if it be granted that the aim of Nature among the lower animals is the development of strength or agility, but among the highest of intelligence. Let this be granted: then, it follows that among the lower the sex which transmits strength will be the selected sex, and the other sex the selector of mates. Now, there

can in general be no doubt which sex is the selected, since this sex is adorned (with plumage, song, mane, paint, jewels, etc.), to catch the fancy of the selector; sex, the male being so adorned and selected among the lower, to transmit strength, the female among the highest, to transmit intelligence. It is true that what men in general *consciously* select in women is beauty rather than intelligence; but then, human beauty when analysed is found to be nothing but an expression of intelligence, of mental health and strength.

We can now, at any rate, appreciate the reason for the constancy of savage warfare, and the rarity of civilised—War depending, not upon ferocity, but upon a wretched ratio between numbers and knowledge, upon the ignorance of a great number somewhere, upon the existence of much riff-raff—this being a corollary from the Law of Life, from the consideration that, if only one man was in France, Germany, there would be no war, though there might be, if only one lion was in each, with little life for its food; or, if the numbers of Frenchmen, Germans, etc., were as now, but they possessed a much larger stock of knowledge, i.e., of wealth and leisure knowingly distributed, still there could be no war, since no surplus numbers, or riff-raff, vile life-stuff, ready for any sensation and change from their tame wretchedness, offering to kings and politicians cheap fodder for cannon. It is, then, a question of ignorance and number. But among the civilised ignorance decreases—knowledge being as the rolling snowball,

the *speed* of whose growth increases with its bigness; in modern Europe it already begins to grow with such speed as more or less to keep pace with numbers, which, moreover, are being voluntarily repressed. But, as to savages, who are *all riff-raff*, their snow-ball of knowledge is next to nothing, and, having no momentum, neither rolls nor grows, while their number mounts up unrepressed by themselves, till want, or war, or bacteria, afresh repress it to a proper ratio with their knowledge. Indeed, in their case, number cannot but mount up unrepressed by themselves, since they lack the knowledge of physiology, and, if they had this, lack the power over Nature necessary to make the proper things to repress it; nor, after a war, does their little stock of knowledge grow through any heightening of the quality of births, for they are polygamous, and their riff-raff girls, instead of being killed as mothers by the war, simply furnish more wives for each man, more children, the Hottentot dancing for joy that a man child is born into the world—the unconscious man, who likes to have his quiver full of them.

We come, then, to a point in our enquiry at which the statement of, say, Haeckel, General Butler, that war is a biological necessity cannot but be consented to: indeed, the proof above proofs that it is necessary is the fact that it happens—unless someone can imagine that there are effects without causes, or that some one animal and his matters are things outside the course and belly of evolving nebulae, so that

something may possibly happen which is not necessary. It is, and has been, necessary, then—though to go on thence, like General Bernhardt, to the statement that it will continue to be necessary seems a mere licence of affirmation. On the contrary, it seems permissible to predict that when knowledge has so spread that the claims of nations to lands cease to be exclusive, and that the claims of individuals to land cease to render the structure of a society too complex for numbers to be repressed by the society itself, then War will cease to be necessary. The science of Economy, only some hundred and fifty years old, is still but little known or applied, countries being still “owned”, not by varieties, but individually, as by palæolithic man, the “owners” being essentially Normans, conquerors, with the conquerors’ mood for fresh conquests abroad under pressure of numbers at home, the non-owners being essentially Saxons, conquered, Israel in Egypt, economic riff-raff, serf-like, furnishing military service to the conqueror, “owners”—a social phasis, offspring of war, and prompt to war, whose collapse in an age of aeroplanes and cathode rays one need possess no spirit of prophesy to foresee. Nevertheless, we know from the Law of Life that, however knowledge be advancing, number has always an innate rage to outrun it—a rage against which private enterprise in repressing number is but a slight and haphazard barrier. It is the variety, acting as an organism, that can alone decide upon its proper number—the State

must do the arithmetic, and take the measures. But how is the State at present to do this? It cannot—lacks data to decide upon its “proper number”, society is too complicated and chaotic. The self-suppression as to number of the French, for instance, is nothing but a groping in the dark: for it may be that the best number of the French, instead of $5n$, as now, is n , all that France now produces in wealth, safety from “enemies”, etc., by $5n$ births of q quality being producible by n births of $5q$ quality, in which case the wealth of a Frenchman would be $5w$ instead of w , as now, and his happiness perhaps $5 \times 5h$, instead of h —happiness being that which is “precious”, not “life”. But nothing of all this can be ascertained in the economic complexity and chaos of our society—a complexity arising of necessity from the fact that countries are not owned by societies, so that, though a country’s wealth in any stage of knowledge is readily ascertainable, no ratio can be calculated between wealth (or knowledge) and number, no estimate made as to how many there ought to be, in order that each may be the virtual owner of so much of the country as a person can win sufficient wealth from to acquire a liking for knowledge and augment its stock—a deplorable truth, considering the wastefulness of War, and of that chaos of unconsciousness which breeds and feeds and raises to be razed by War those crops of riff-raff which need never have been born. This, however, may anon be well. There lives and grows that Tree

of Knowledge—fruit good for food, fruit to be desired to make one wise—and with it grows that Spirit of the Hive which, as Maeterlinck says, “disposes pitilessly of the wealth, the liberty, the lives of all this winged people, which regulates day by day the number of births, and contrives that this shall bear a definite ratio with the flowers that brighten the countryside. . . .”

X

ON THE CAUSE OF WAR

A COMPOSITE photograph of all Englishmen would be a face of a different expression from a composite photograph of all Frenchmen; and such a photograph of Englishmen it is which can be considered to be the face of Britannia—as to whom it is frequently said that, since she is merely a convenient symbol, not a real being, we behave wrongly if we behave as if she were real.

It appears, however, that to behave as if symbols were real beings can be highly right, a whole branch of mathematics being based upon the assumption that the symbol of an impossible quantity (the square root of minus one) is a real being; and it is by regarding Humanity as One that many a scientist decides to lay down his life for Him, dying as X-ray Christs, dying of tubercle bacillus, self-infected, and so on; and, if regarding Britannia as a real being, and standing up at "God save the King" has "cost millions of lives", are there not things of more importance than millions of lives?

Is War, then, actually of some importance as is now (naturally) thought by those who passed through

torments in 1914-1918? How many were killed? Ten millions? In three years? Is that of some importance? As many die every three months; and twenty million (better ones) press in their stead. And the other harms of War, are they not as transitory as this, and much of the good of War transitory too? But while that good lasts, and largeness of heart is the vogue, and a laugh at a breath of fresh air is in the land, bravo for War, which abolishes civil war—is it not *civil* war, the dull war of the slugs now going on, that is important and is odious? Let the trumpets sound, though, and now that duke of Grosvenor Square, that grocer of Grays Inn Road, whose hand has been against every man, getting all he can out of his country, giving nothing, now his ears hear a voice of sirens crying, rumours of an old music are abroad, and such bugles going as gods use, calling “Come! suffer! die!—for Me!”: and he, enticed, is up, he is off—goodbye, all—to *die*—for Other than himself—he, the lubber, springing up a hero, the sneak-thief, see, is become a redeemer, the saunterer in clubs transformed into a martyr: and is not this the greatest that can happen to men, the saving of their souls? If they die of it, or go mad, what matters?

Of course the thing is Negro, and the Europeans who still do it must expect to be giggled at by their sons’ sons; but it is perhaps the least important of the Negro things among us, since its (inherent) results are soon over. As for the next one “wrecking civilisation”, as the phrase is, that does not seem

reflective.¹ A world-war could wreck civilisation as much and as little as turning a meadow's sod with a stick wrecks the earth's lithosphere: all the scientists, the text-books, apparatus, would have to be destroyed, occupying a thousand armies a thousand years. That was laughable, those bombings of London of the Kaiser!—like the fantastic bright-ideas of faddist inventors, and boys playing at war; if the bombs had been millionfold more in number and in power, the thing would still have been comic: for London needed some years to build, and is still mainly there, not troubling to smile at that bummung of flies.

It was the good that was done that was big, if fleeting, a good to be achieved in a lasting fashion by education, when the nations start teaching the child nothing but science, nothing but the habit of scepticism and inventing, of seeing untruth and truth, which is the trait of an intelligence educated to strength. Until then, War will do the good of calling to the common man, what Science calls to all, "*Your life is nothing, come, live and die for Something*"; and, of course, there will be more of the savage stuff, and still more, for all the Pacts, Locarnos, Confer-
ences, until men, so educated, see and abolish the cause of it.

That cause, it appears, is simpler, deeper, more recondite, more inexorable, than Premiers see when they take pleasure-trips, and meet to speak of peace, saying, "Peace, Peace", where there is no head

¹ This chapter was last revised in 1935 —J.G.

piece: for is not that cause of War the earth itself? —a question of land, of site-values? The nations claim portions of the earth's surface as wholly their own; and if this claim is fictitious? Certainly a portion of the earth *is* partly a nation's own, in so far as the nation has *taken*, i e., worked, it; but hasn't it an extra-value that other nations create, and therefore own? An acre of land at Charing Cross is of more value than an acre in Mashonaland, owing to its site, London being round about it; and those who use it should pay the rent of its site to London, which, creating that extra-value, owns it until they do, there will be a sort of civil war always fretting, every Englishman at war with England, as a consequence of strained relations with the nation. So likewise England, as an entity of acres, has a site-value: Englishmen are better off for being in a planet in the midst of nations labouring at things and ideas than if England were a planetesimal wayfaring by itself in space: so Englishmen should pay a site-rent to the nations which, creating that extra-value, own it: until they do, there will be War, not civil, as a consequence of strained relations between nations. National war, until countries are owned, not by village Jims, but by nations; international war, until the planet is owned, not by little Englands, but by Man, this taking place whenever a growth of population, anywhere outvieing the growth of science, makes poverty gross, bringing about a consciousness of wrong somewhere and a mood of quarrel with the

four winds; international war unimportant in comparison with national war (for it must be forty-millionfold less wrong for forty millions to pocket a world's value than for one Lord Jim of the village to pocket it). But, unimportant *in itself*, War, not civil is still important for the incubus of preparedness which its probability makes necessary: England, for example: England is rich in minerals; but how poverty-stricken the nation! it can't afford to create laboratories to make its boys philosophers—spends a thousand millions in preparing to fight; which thousand millions will in time be presented to a World's Treasury as site-rent, the World's Treasury to spend such sums upon world-works—there upon a Channel-tunnel—there upon the Mesopotamian desert—anon awarding as prize a diadem of diamonds to some scientist's forehead—and anon squandering that cash like water upon some majesty of orgy, some appalling pomp of the family of Man.

XI

OF RELIGION AND IRRELIGION

"WE SEE stretches of our cities going pagan under our eyes—more destitute of religion than some tracts of India": so Dr. W. R. Maltby at a Wesleyan Conference at Manchester.

Those "tracts of India destitute of religion" would be difficult to discover, I think—using "religion" in Dr. Maltby's sense of a willingness to give money to priests. But is "going pagan"—i.e., rejecting priests, becoming non-Christian, non-Mahometan, non-Buddhist, non-ancient—is this to become "destitute of religion"? or is it not to give up being irreligious, and to become religious? Let us see.

There is a Power that moves the universe—'buses, wings, solar systems; this is a fact, the only fact which we are powerless to doubt—though to say "*a Power that*" is a little odd, as though there were other powers that move what is outside the universe; there is nothing outside: so let us say simply "there is Power"—Energy, Stress, Might, Force. For Power is Force: Power is power to do something, to make an event happen; now, only five events can possibly happen: (1) something may

move; (2) something may stop moving; (3) something may move faster; (4) something may move slower; (5) something may move on a new course; if we attempt to conceive some event which is not one of these, we fail; and these, we know, are due to Force: so Power is Force.

Now, Force is a Mystery, infinitely unknowable: for we can only know something that has qualities, has a nature—a clock, a cock; and Force has no nature, for, if It had, It would be forced—like clocks, cocks—to behave according to its nature: but only Force can force; anything *else* is forceless: so Force would force Force—which is nonsense. So Force has no nature, is *above* nature, *super*-natural; It effects, affects, is not affected; is Absolute Lord and God, Almighty, Unknowable: for that which is above nature is X, inconceivable, to us who are in nature, who are not “made in His image”, He having no image, an image being bounded, He unbounded: and thou shalt not make to thyself any mental image, false god, or idol, nor bow down to Mumbo Jumbo, for I, the Lord thy God, am an imageless sort of god, not unworthy the worship of your heart’s heart, as your half-as-farthing fancies are.

There are, indeed, people—highly intelligent, many of them—who are pleased to name themselves “atheists”, and say that there is “*no*” God; but, then, these are merely people who are under a misconception as to the meaning of a word, and when they assert “there is *no God*”, they do not at all mean that

there is no God, no Power to move suns, feet, they mean that God cannot be imagined, is not such as priests and the Negro peoples imagine It, Him, Her, to be; but they do not say what they mean, and, in saying in their haste what they do *not* mean, they utter a nonsense, forgetting that "God" is just another English name for Power, the Almighty, Whose being is as perfectly certain to them, to larks, to Martians, as it is completely mysterious.

But though we can never know anything of Force, we can know facts *about* Force—can know, for example, that there is much Force, that God is great; or we can know that, on the whole, God is good, i e., that the sum of motions makes eventually for the happiness of the army of living things; this we know—scientifically now—in the same way that we know that water will warm sulphuric acid to-morrow, because it has warmed it in the past.

Now, religion is an attitude of adoration and of donation to God—the donation depending upon the adoration.

And, evidently, adoration depends upon knowledge about the object adored: we cannot adore a vacuum, nor adore when under chloroform: must be conscious, conscious of something, know something about some order of things, i e., must be more or less scientists, a scientist being a person who knows something about order. And since adoration is a compound of (1) awe, and (2) love, before adoring we must *know* two facts, that God is (1) great, and (2) good.

Now, these are cosmic (or orderly) facts: so no ancient could suspect them, since the ancients had hardly any science (consciousness of cosmic facts): so religion is a modern thing like aeroplanes. They, new to the universe, and anxious, as savages still are, asked, "What shall I do to be saved?", and, villagers in mood, they discovered the answer, "Love the neighbours, be good to Jim, turn the other cheek to Gertie." This was done—became the individual's village-morality. We are saved, are not anxious, know that the universe moves to good, to better, and, worldly in mood, religious, we ask, not "What shall I do to be saved?", but "What shall I *think* to further a world, and what shall I *make*—how conquer disease, see into economics, speak across the seas, reach the Poles, the Moon?" Their "religions", then, village-religions, said, "Love God and the neighbours"—as though there was some connection between the two loves; but, as to loving God—much—that was impossible for them, for we can only love what gives us pleasure; a rose, a baby, a lover; cannot love what gives us bad smells, leprosy, "palsy", poverty: so that, to contrive to love Him a little, they, pretty miserable, had to invent "another world" free of leprosy, having no suspicion that in this world the greatness of God's goodness causes Life to evolve, and that science would arise to abolish poverty and "palsy": hence, so far from loving God, they were God-fearing, their fear "casting out love", as our love casts out fear.

Jesus, then, was not religious. Plato, Buddha, Philo, Mahomet—were not religious compared with us, since they had not our data, our *means* to be religious, we having got to know three things about God: (1) that the stars are suns, (2) that men are related to apes, (3) that the earth, seven thousand million years old, is likely to last ten times longer: the knowledge of which facts puts us in a new universe, makes us new creatures, of a mood and outlook different by billions of times from that of ancient men: for it is the place of residence that makes the animal. Jesus believed that some day the stars will “fall from heaven”, “like fig-leaves”, upon Jerusalem, say; our stars can’t do that: a million earths can fall into the sun, a million suns into Betelgeuse, there being doubtless billions of Betelgeuses, the universe consisting of “island-universes”, across an island light taking thirty thousand years to travel, taking a million to travel from island to island; and there may be millions of islands. God’s great: we have awe. And we have love: for we know the Gospel, the tidings of Great Joy, that we are related to snakes, that there is a principle of Progress in Being, leading on to lives that will one day be wiser, finer, more wildly delighted than ever entered into our little hearts to fancy: how greatly good! it might not have been so; we can’t help loving what made it so, though we still know pain. No archangel appeared to the mother of him who proclaimed this Revelation to say, “You shall bear a son, and shall call his name

'Charles' ", yet *he* was Messiah, the teacher of dancing to the heart, harbinger of jubilee: beautiful were his feet on the mountains. What is amusing is that priests, professional experts in gospels, did to him what they did to those who announced that the stars are suns—reviled, denied him—did not even see that his gospel was gospel, but blasphemed because his cosmic gospel of knowledge abolished their village gospel of opium-smoke, littly good, which saves the soul of Sambo and village Jim, males whom God, a male, somehow "*loves*".

So, having awe and love, we have adoration. And from adoration springs donation. A public spirit is abroad in "those stretches of our cities that are going pagan", a religious spirit, that is not villager, not troubled about "loving neighbours", but is new-religious, worldly, as much larger than the mental range of savages, of the ancients, as Paris under a humming of aeroplanes is larger-minded than a kraal or Jericho. And those who have deepest in their consciousness such facts as that stars are suns, what a spectacle of donation! The martyrs of old died to obtain "Heaven", "Nirvana"; not so Catterall, who inoculated himself with yellow-fever—not for his "neighbour", but for a planet in space—not so Lola, who inoculated himself with tetanus, nor Lewis who lately gave himself neuritis, nor Chervin, who poisoned himself with black-vomit, Bosso with tubercle bacillus, Garré with glanders—hundreds of them—holier far than other martyrs, gallanter far

than other vanguards of other armies. Not "destitute of religion", these, though "pagan" enough, despising priests as inferior types, and indignant at that irreligion of priests which keeps them villagers, keeps them really pagan, for "pagan" means villager, keeps them blind and deaf to God's Gospel, to the revelation of God's greatness, and of the greatness of God's goodness.

XII

ON TOLERANCE

IT HAPPENS nowadays that when one has occasion to mention God, one has an impulse to stop to explain oneself, lest he be supposed to be insisting upon an existence which it pleases his caprice to conceive, in contradiction to others who see that there is no such existence: so much has a word of definite sense lost definiteness, and, like old lira notes in Italy, become a shred all hoggish, because of the inveterate rote of clergymen's hurdy-gurdy, who ever take that Name in vain.

So, then, is this syllable to be abolished now from the lips of articulate speakers? English would be pitifully impoverished by such a loss! One would never be able to compose a poem, or say anything. And there is no need, since "God" is the English name of something as to whose being every living thing is not merely certain, but, strictly speaking, is certain of that alone, perfectly certain of nothing else.

But hear one of our most voluble bishops: "So, and so points to the existence of God"—this "God" being a proper name for him, as it were John God,

having the stale familiarity of a character in fiction, of Mr. Pickwick, whose unreality is taken for granted, who is a slogan, a name, and no more; such speakers coming as near to being atheist as a living thing may, so that, religion being bliss, wretched is the name of them. Or hear a canon: John God "is banished from the world by deism (godism), which puts Nature in His place". Our bits of bishops and canons, now! How admirably God remains tolerant of that blattering of their stalenesses, and does not gobble them up suddenly in the gulf of Him! But, then, that is the prerogative of God, to be tolerant it is not always ours. Excellent, indeed, is tolerance in men, all men are so easily wrong. But if we see vast harm being done by a caste numbering thousands, and are tolerant, is that pretty citizenship? We aren't tolerant of burglars, murderers, who do no vast harm: is it possible that we should be tolerant of them, if they were a caste as numerous as parsons? Or is that a fancy, not an actual fact among us, that the caste of parsons do vast harm? They do, if it is true that they depress a nation's intelligence: for from intelligence we get all our superhets, all, all, our goods. *Is* it true, as many say, that they depress intelligence? dim it, hypnotise, sopify, cajole, jink, hum, it? that they are a caste of charlatans? They earn their living by quoting and extolling in the twentieth century the notions of the first century: is there not in such a thing something impudently mummer, essentially

charlatan? Is there, then, no God, no Power causing motion, no Change, Evolution, Progress, to have our Europe urged a peg, or two, or twenty, above the mentation of the first century? "If Christ came to Chicago"—or imperial Cæsar—is much historical imagination required to divine that they would be astounded at seeing a street-length of cars darting, with no donkeys to cart them, and would not the heart in them faint at the angel strangeness of an aeroplane wayfaring with muttering and meditation up among the vapours of heaven? And if the business of a clique consists in insisting for money that motion does not exist, that God is not a Reality, but just a fancy of Darwin, Newton, that the highest type on earth remains eternally at the level above the ape of Abraham, Jesus, Peter, Plato, that the ever-moving never moves, nor ever will move in millions of years, consists in presenting the ancient Asiatic to the respect of the air-mechanic, is not this charlatan? And if what charlatans say is accepted as intelligent by even a tenth of the people, must not this be depressing to the average of the national intelligence? They *do*, then, do vast harm, making tolerance of them a wrong: for to be paid to teach, and not to teach, is an evil, but to be paid to teach, and to *dis*teach (so to say), is even a deep evil. Does not education consist in a strengthening of intelligence? and since intelligence consists in a relation to truth—in a readiness to refuse untruth (scepticism), and in a readiness to seize truth (inventiveness)—is not

education a training in disrespect, an eradication of that respect and gape which is ingrained in Hodge and children, and so is the contrary of what Chinese scholars imagine education to be?—for to invent is as much to disrespect as to be sceptical is to disrespect, since to invent one must have seen some defect in the past, and must esteem past men less than himself: so that in priests we see a clique who deliberately *diseducate*, *weaken* intelligence, preaching “be not unbelieving, but believing”, preaching, not disrespect, but even respect, not even respect of the educated, of the sceptic and inventor, but, like Asiatics and the ancients and savages, respect of the ancients.

And let no good citizen, believing that they now mow and mouth without influence, be tolerant for this reason: for they wear washed shirts, and, if like the first of men they go in aprons, these are not aprons of fig-leaves; they bear themselves with assurance, produce an effect: England is still called “a Christian country”, nor could be called so, if it was not somewhat so. No one calls France so—only twenty miles away eastward, though ever fifty years away westward with the sun of Time.

So I, for my part, drop being tolerant here. Some one writes of me the libel that I am “anti-clerical” and “impolite” to clerics, but I should not like to catch myself being anti anything by predilection and bias, or pro anything—except pro England, pro world, pro God; nor is it true that I am “impolite”

in respect of my lord bishop if by "politeness" he means what politeness really means—good citizenship, fine citizenship (from "polites", a citizen). Now, *fine citizenship* is never so truly polite as when, to its own distress, it chooses to be ruthlessly rude, as when it shoots a lunatic going with a gun, or tugs a lady by her hair from before a motor-bus coming. And so as to our whiffs of bishops' politeness, or fine citizenship, is no longer tolerant and nice. For with what grub do our bishops feed their so hungry sheep? With this: that "*So, and so points to the existence of God.*" But, then, all things point to this, for all things are in motion, both as wholes and in each bit of them: so that this, if it was not babble, would be blasphemy; but it is babble, it falls short of being articulate talk at all. Nor is it merely bishops who preach this species of gibberish: for in an admirable treatise by the "rationalist", Mr. P. Vivian, which I have been reading, one meets with this tidings: that the Chinese hardly believe in the existence of—God. However, there never yet was man, nor mastodon, nor dog, nor mouse, nor louse, nor flower, that has had a doubt of the existence of God, "God" having the meaning which each bishop, each Bushman, each philosopher, each dictionary-writer, each living thing, is bound to agree to give to it: "God is the Power that causes phenomena"—causes that of which Life is conscious; and since in our consciousness of anything we are always conscious that it is *caused*, and since God causes it, we can say, instead, that

"God is that Power of which Life is constantly conscious", or, still shorter, "God is Power".

Now, the brow and bowels of that Power are no doubt boundlessly profound, boundlessly, then, you say, beyond the defining or divining of Life; still, Life can never doubt Power's *existence*, of which it is constantly conscious. There should be nothing; but somehow Something is, and it moves, changes: this we know; this alone we utterly know. But to Power our bishop sees it still serviceable to attribute this or that suburban principle: gives it as pedagogic, Miltonic, Semitic; and when I, with a wink and a dig in the ribs, cry "Ha! ha! excellent! sly dog!", he, with a gravity whereat one has a right to feel aggrieved, replies, "No, really, I am serious: my wife's a suburban lady—she really believes that to Power are joined these foibles; you, I see, do not believe in the Power of which Life is constantly conscious, but so and so *points* to the existence of Power." This does not seem articulate talk; nor where our obsolete canon's mouth gabbles that God, that Power, is banished from the world by godism; nor where our nodding rationalist announces that Chinese lives are not conscious of the Power of which Life is constantly conscious.

Sayings so idle are due to an essentially savage or childish habit in the use of this syllable "God", which savage habit again is to be attributed to the essentially savage character of every such expression as "deism", "pantheism", "theism", "atheism",

"theology", and so on—words which will anon cease to be whirled about the world, seeing that each of them ("atheism", too) tells of an essentially Zulu attempt to divine and define the essence of the Power of which Life is constantly conscious—an essence which, if it be infinitely profound, must through infinite Time remain infinitely beyond the defining or divining of Life. As to "the agnostic", who well says "I do not know", let him not fight with the scientist, who well says "I know"—who knows something *about* God, knows that God is good to, or for, Life, since He everlastingly captains the host of Life from three-toed to hoofed, from lizard to linnet, from ape to pope to Rutherford: nor is that "*He*" in reference to God to be resented, for, after all, one must say something—"He", "She", "It"—of which grotesque three "*It*", surely, is the most grotesque? and in saying "He", "She", the philosopher wishes to hint that, whereas he guesses that God is not conscious and intelligent, nor uses any of the clumsy modes of animals on planets, he understands that there must be states of being that as infinitely transcend consciousness and intelligence as these transcend zero. . . . At all events, that is what one means by "God"; what all Life means, for, as Moslems say, "there is no God but *the* God": the Power of which Life is constantly conscious—in sleep, in anæsthesia; the God of the bishop and the Bushman; but quite stripped of those qualities which the ladies of the bishop's flock at five o'clock tea attribute to Him—

but not even the bishop himself, I think, really. If he is ignorant, it is a guilty ignorance; if he is not ignorant, still greater is his guilt so to degrade our English. Really such Englishmen should be ashamed of themselves so to wound the womb that bare them, the breast they rest on: they are a bane and a brake, a trouble and a cross to their country's odyssey; and, I repeat, it is not merely fine and polite to say so, but it is unrefined and impolite not to say so, and already is being *considered* impolite. Let my lord, then, eat and drink, making of his apron a serviette, and revel in to-day: to-morrow he is done: for though the gates of Hell shall not prevail against him, the gates of Heaven will, and *they* are horridly thorough

XIII

OF VENGEANCE

VENGEANCE in general is a good, nor is anything stranger than that the laziness of men in respect of taking vengeance should have led them to accept as plausible a doctrine so wrong, biologically, as the goodness of forgiveness for to weaken, by hurting, the doer of evil is clearly to work toward rooting out weeds, and to further evolution.

As to *public* vengeance—courts, prisons—to effect this weeding out, this is a bright idea which has all that dog's-luck of savage bright ideas. A grown-up Government will find other things to occupy it than the storms in a teacup of private wrongs; nor are the sort of "judges" chosen less of a dog's-luck than the courts themselves—men with no training save a Mongol training in memorising and respecting—ceremonies, opinions, precedents! men, moreover, who have passed half a lifetime as barristers in an attitude of callousness to truth, in making blue look white for money, atheists in respect of truth, nay, hired assassins of truth, who are imagined, on being "raised to the Bench", to change their second nature, and become chums of truth. But to put

revenge into public hands is like calling in a plough to manicure one, is not less gawky, bungling, and, like other inventions of savages retained in civilisation, must do much ravage, crashing, like shrapnel into a china-shop, into the fine mesh of private lives, especially of women and children, a "judge" making per month as many as ten prostitutes probably. In lands such as Italy where revenge is looked upon as a moral duty, the individual rejects with contempt a mechanism so ataxic. *How* ataxic! for, since two eye-witnesses usually acquire two impressions, and, with full sincerity, present differing evidence, how deliciously irrelevant must be the impression of the "judge" built up out of the conflicting evidence of witnesses influenced by reasons to be insincere! And, if they are sincere and agreeing, still his impression must needs bear the same relation to the truth of the event, its mood and *humour*, as a golliwog of Congo, land to the humour of a face. And it is all the more ataxic because the "judge" sits calm: but what is before him is not a problem in algebra, to which a formula is applicable, but a uniqueness out of the complex of Being, suddenly confronting him; the man has no means to deal with it, is all at sea and out of touch, nor can thinking, if he could think, help him here; whereas the private avenger is provided by Nature with heat, and with a thermometer within him by which to measure the unique wrong, and wreak unique justice: if the wrong is great, or is little, just so is his heat, his vengeance; Nature in him is

the Judge, the just Avenger; nor without this *just* heat can the "dispassionate judge" any more do *justice* than he can, by algebra, decide just how much each of a thousand men should eat at any moment.

Nor is the "judge" all ataxic as to quantity of punishment only, but as to sort also: to punish every sort of offence Nature does not say "go to prison"; a hand put to a fire She burns; if put nearer, She burns at by *just* so much more, such is Her *justice*; but, if one jumps out of a window, She does not burn: and so with the variety of the private avenger's vengeance: he gives quid pro quo, the "judge" always "quod" pro quo—so pauper, after all, in invention as in scepticism are lawyer-minds.

Moreover, it is not in respect of punishment only, its quantity and its sort, that the avenger is just, but in respect of pardon also: he knows somewhat; and the more he knows the more will pardon, since to understand is to pardon: so that the saying "forgive seventy times" would have been worthy of a biologist if entered on the intellectual plane, but it was uttered on the social or moral plane: and it is morally that it is wrong: for the partialness so far of men's perception that all wrongs are pardonable corresponds with the quantity of wrongs done, and, through vengeance tends to root out wrong. But the avenger, in so far as he understands, pardons: takes into account that his neighbour, the wronger, drinks, as the wronger's grandfather did, is weakish, queerish, in the fix of one of a million shades of one of a

million idiosyncrasies or fates, and he pardons just enough, avenges just enough, for his Age and stage of intelligence, Nature in him being his Mentor, for "vengeance is *Mine*, I will repay", says Nature. But the "judge" is all at sea, knows nothing, understands nothing, would need years of intimacy or actual eye-witnessing to understand; if he pardons, he pardons at random by impulse, but hardly can pardon, being the parrot of a formula; and every time condemns another animal for his own lack of understanding.

Nor is the "judge" impotent to pardon alone, he is impotent to punish, if formal evidence fails, and there is a "brilliant barrister"; whereas the private avenger requires no formal evidence, *he* knows, nor is blinded by any barrister "in whom the footlights have lost an ornament"—horrid person really, paladin of untruth, odioso a Dio ed ai nemici suoi. The whole curiosity will be more or less unintelligible, I imagine, to future Man marshalled under the dynasty and everlasting Kingdom of scientists, like the other curiosities that a society designed by lawyer-minds must exhibit.

XIV

ON ETERNAL AND TEMPORAL

EDUCATION is a bringing out, so that, literally, a horse brought out of a stable is educated; but we only use the word now to refer to bringing out from a condition of drowsing the powers of the mind to a condition of activity: and since MIND is that which can acquire a consciousness of truth, education, then, is the bringing of the mind to a condition of activity to acquire this consciousness: so the educated mind is not one which is conscious of many truths, as scholars, shopkeepers, are, but is one which has been brought to a certain condition of activity, to a habit of strength in "reflecting" (as we say) on truth, so as to decide rightly "this is true", "that is not true".

Now, truths are of two sorts—eternal and temporal, or say cosmic and individual, the eternal or cosmic being called "scientific"; and traffic with this sort naturally has a virtue in bringing out a habit of strength in reflecting, a virtue which certainly the other sort not only has not, but rather has the opposite result, not only not educating, but rather, so to say, *uneducating*, *diseducating*, and lullabying to a habit of lassitude. My consciousness of the

temporary truth that my tobacco-jar is kept on a book-case is very useful to me, but provokes no reflection, has no tendency to rouse my powers from drowsing, whereas my consciousness of the eternal truth that the nicotine in tobacco is a poison provokes, strengthens, reflection, until finally some mind is educated by this consciousness to the height of hitting upon the invention of spraying roses with nicotine to kill insects. Hence to present to a mind the temporal, the individual—accidents, conventions—like teaching one to read, to spell, to become “literate”—does not educate, but *diseducates*. A boy once asked me “What does *morbid* mean?” I told him that it means diseased: was he now more educated, reflected stronger, thought straighter, than if I had told him that *morbid* means soft? We English of the moment have agreed that *morbid* shall mean diseased, while the Italians of the moment have the convention that *morbid* shall mean soft, and are as inclined to smile at our “*morbid bone*” as we to smile at their “*morbid velvet*”—conventions as capricious, trivial, temporal, as the conventions of *kiss-in-the-ring*. Not even very reasonable conventions, in the case of languages—most of them; the ill-chosen vocables—“*purr*”, say; not very clever; *krokro* might do, *ronron*, but where does the *p* come in? or “*paw*”—or “*or*”: too much sound: fancy “*or*” having the same sound as “*awe*”; and what means *or* in Italian means water in French, as what means *frown* in English means women in German, as what means *stink* in English means shin

in Italian, and so on endlessly. And the senselessness of phrase—"I have been"; "I am been" may be better, as Germans, Italians, say—"am, after being"; as there is some sense in "I have taken—a cake", "have a cake, taken"; but not "have been", been not being a thing. And the queernesses: the plural of mouse is mice, of œuf is eu—so haphazard, fantastic; yet, if I said to the common man "it is less fantastic to say œufs, not eu, to say mouses, houses, not mice, hice", he would consent outwardly, but *au fond* would think *me* fantastic, so much does just custom make what is natural look fantastic, what is fantastic look natural, nay solemn—"solemn" *meaning* customary, as does "moral", "ethical", eth in Greek meaning much the same as sol, mor, in Latin; and, if I went out now dressed up as Beau Brummell, instead of getting the lids of reverence that he got, I would get giggles—the solemnness all gone. So with language: "How do you do?" and echo answers "I do not do"—antic, Boer, quaint, Lapland, outlandish, to make a cat laugh, if the cat is *free*, to see. And our German way of jerking out h—tickles a Frenchman! who thinks of the sick ejecting the breath for the physician to smell, and he thinks our "educated" as ridiculous for jerking out h as our "educated" think our "uneducated" ridiculous for *not* jerking out h. And the often absurd spellings, convention of the often absurd words, convention—there is no clever schoolboy who could not invent a better set of conventions in the way of a

language than any that has yet been gabbled by man: so that that is little rational to entertain any respect for fashions so passing and frothy, or to imagine that a knowledge of them tends to educate any more than a knowledge of the conventions of chuck-penny or shorthand. Useful conventions—very, and the teacher of children, seeing clearly that a knowledge of them will be useful, teaches them, *forgetting* that he is not a general benefactor, but an educator and nothing else, and that conventions, though useful, are not useful to *educate*, to educe scepticism and inventiveness, so that he, the bringer-out of scepticism and inventiveness, has nothing to do with conventions, since they tend to *deaden* scepticism and inventiveness. An educator should be educated; and it is too muddle-headed in one educated to assume that a useful thing must be useful for all ends, that because a saw is useful for sawing, therefore it must be useful as a boot-lace or a book-case.

And when "education" is made to *consist* of this traffic with passing fashions, that is laughable! I think that "purr" is at present spelled with two r's, fur with one: and *this* is the stuff that the young are still stuffed with, to bring them to think and see, and lift up their eyes to the hills. And those who know about fur and err form "the educated", with a middle-class point of non-view, while the poor mechanic, Edison, Faraday, who do not know about fur and err, or know with a shrug, are "the uneducated class". Yet some years hence fur and purr will

be as forgotten on the tongues of men as Chaldean is, Middle English, Doric Greek, as Sweet foresees that coster-Cockney will presently be the convention, when the lords and lawyers, if any are left, will be saying "Mrs. Enery Awkins"—which, any way, is distinctly more refined and pretty than Henry Hawkins, hawking up the Hawkins; but meantime an unfortunate child is taught that Hawkins is refined and Awkins vile, with the same solemnity of face with which a child will presently be taught that Awkins is refined, but Hawkins a horrid hawk of quaint barbarians.

Probably girls are at present being better educated than boys, being less meddled with, crammed with grammars and it is better to be stationary than to be led astray, as Spencer says; girls, moreover, are more taught the piano, drawing, hockey, golf, tennis—all manual work, traffic with things, genuine education, though this they call their "accomplishments", while what they call their "education"—reading, history, geography, grammar—has no tendency to educate, and ruins the prick of the young intellect. Boys, on their side, have cricket—as Wellington won the battle of Waterloo on the playgrounds of Eton, and lost it (or nearly did) in the classrooms: for the more grammatic a general's pen, the less dramatic his sword. But all that conventional stuff—reading, spelling, etc.—one should pick up somehow, as one finds it useful or amusing, *after* being educated—and one picks it up flyingly *then*—

as the Fulham man gets to know the conventional numbers of the Fulham 'buses without being taught it, the educator's sole task being to educate, to teach a knack, the knack of seeing truth, of seeing the untruth of untruths, and being sceptical, of seeing the truth of truths, and being inventive· sceptical and inventive—those two which distinguish moderns from ancients, scientists from Chinese-like scholars, from children, from savages; and since we have observed that nothing but traffic in eternal truth can educe the brain to these two relations with truth, so nothing but eternal truth, science, is the tool of education.

And even in teaching science the educator's object is not *to* teach science: that's not his *job*, to give *any sort* of knowledge, or goloshes, or jugs, or sugar, or Christmas-hampers, or passports, or other useful thing; but only to give two useful things, scepticism and inventiveness, which two things are one thing—WISDOM—like the two faces of the same blazing sabre: having which, one can then get *all sorts* of knowledge, and goloshes, and jugs, and sugars, and healths, and heavens. No need to teach a child to read: to teach conventions *dulls*, not brightens, makes *foolish*, not wise; in his second year of life the child reads and writes *spontaneously*, if he is then a trained scientist, as Mrs. Montessori has proved.

But we teach them conventions and accidents! bare is naked, but bear is an animal. Italy is like a boot. England is four hundred miles long.

William the Matabele reigned in 1066. Boots are made in Nottingham: ah, but how profoundly dull, how sure to bring to ruin the briskness of any waking brain which just hears a hint of such ditch-water! Accidents! conventions! nothing eternal, universal, to elate and emb brave the brain. Suppose that one comes upon a group of boys playing marbles; one asks "What's the game?"; they answer "if blue strikes red, we gain ten": that is their convention; one goes to another group, in France, one asks, and they answer "If white strikes blue, we gain five": that is their convention, but is one any better educated now after knowing that? One's *memory* is, as *any* nonsense that one tries to remember—the arguments of Plato, the Book of Ceremonies of the Chou Dynasty, Whang Hou's Admonitions to his Sons, the comic physics of Aristotle—*any* nonsense educates the memory quite as well as science does; and the memory of Chinese scholars, of people like Macaulay, does often become monstrously educated, bulking to a certain hypertrophy of deformity, but memory is the lowest of the mental functions, being known to exist in beings as low as infusoria, while in bees it seems to be superhuman. But otherwise one is not better educated after knowing the conventions of many groups of marble-players, or of many languages—by which time one is a scholar, a Chinaman, a pundit, one's brain deplorably ruined, stale, softened, deformed, like treadlers who always use one leg, and go crooked and crippled.

But suppose that, instead of asking "What's the game?", as scholars, lawyers, clerics, do, one sets oneself to discovering just how much heat is developed when one marble hits another—ah, then, we can see what a higher *type* of being that will bring one out to, educating, bringing out, all one's handicraft and headcraft, one's strength of brain, mental muscle, independence, one's *finesse*, trickiness, resourcefulness, one's reason, veracity, reverence, disrespect, selflessness—in two words all one's scepticism and inventiveness, in one word all one's Wisdom.

Things, then, not conventions; eternal not temporals . . .

It is a question of the hands: for, as the racial brain-development *followed* upon development of the hand, so must the individual's brain; before birth his development follows the racial course, and not less after birth it must, the baby from his first year learning to deal with woods, metals—being a physicist, that is, a "natural philosopher", a philosopher.

XV

OF TIME-TRAVELLING

FOR THE time-machines of science-fiction "impossible" is Mr. Edward Lang's word in his article *Time Travelling*.¹ But are they only "impossible"? Is not "absurd" the *mot juste* here? For let us wink at the initial absurdity of such a notion as the motion of steel in Time, yet is it not evident that soon after the Time-Traveller starts into the future he arrives at the day of his death, and dies, so that all his later adventures are false? So, too, if he travels into the past: at once he comes to the day before his conception in the womb, whereupon his presence in the pottery of the cosmos is preposterous.

But for H. G. Wells' Time and Time-Machine there was an excuse: somewhere in the nineties of another century a person named Wells thought that "a cube has length, breadth, thickness and Duration!" with a capital D (I hope); but it was not the latest Wells who said that, it was another person who did not know what species of things an atom is: for, of course, a person who knows something is not the same person as a person who does not know it,

¹ In *Tomorrow* (Vol. 2. No. 2), 1938.

since knowledge is part of personality. The latest Wells knows, and doubtless smiles at the idea of a cube having duration, or at a person, or anything, having duration—save One, save Force. A cube, a person, anything, is made of atoms—partly, anyway; atoms are moving systems; and, of course, a moving system is at every instant a new thing; “look, new moon”, that is just the truth.

However, Mr. Lang, in rejecting Wells, falls back upon J. W. Dunne: in rejecting Time-Machines, falls back upon Dreams, for it appears that in dreams one may travel on a Time-Machine not made with steel. Dunne’s explanation being that Time is a “*dimension*”—of something!—to which *dimension* one is in a special relation in sleep. That it is a *dimension* was likewise Wells’ idea, is likewise Einstein’s, for whom the universe is four-dimensional, is Space-Time, a “Continuum” of length, breadth, depth, and—Time.

This, though, as Spencer used to say, “cannot be imagined”. When the good Einstein says to me, “Try to imagine it,” my reply is, “*You* try, then come and let me know how you got on.” If it were true, Mind would be a foreigner in the cosmos—which, however, is not to say that it is untrue, but only to say that it can never be science, since we can never know what we are fundamentally powerless to imagine.

“*Dimension*” indeed is a space-term, inapplicable to Time, which is not, like Space, an existence, but

is just a ratio—of Force to the product of Space and Mass.

Suppose that once upon a time the force of a dyne was applied an instant to the mass of a gram, then the mass, encountering no resistance, moved, is for ever moving on; not infinitely quickly, not infinitely slowly; how quickly, how slowly, is an inherence in Being, every movement in the universe taking place at the same ratio, the ratio or "rate" at which children grow, frogs hop, sceptics and inventors cogitate, suns rush and shout; that ratio is Time, so $t = C(sm/f)$, where t is the time, s the distance done to date, m the mass, f the force, C a constant; t varying as s and m , varying inversely as f , having no existence except as a ratio between existences: as there may be a ratio between a cheese and a chisel, but no such existence as cheese:chisel.

But in Dunne's fancy not only is Time an existence, a fourth "*dimension*", but, as though four were not one too many, there are more than four; there is fifth, sixth, and so on, and there is Observer Two (*after* Death One!) to be aware of Time Two, as there is Observer Three (*after* Death Two?) to be aware of Time Three, and so on: so in dreams (since sleep is something like death) "we", being then something like Observer Two, see the future a little, and then "we" die, "we" are Observers Two, and see it clearly.

But the fact that there is some distinction between Observer One and Observer Two certainly means

that "we" can't be both, for, if Observer Two is different, he is another, is not "we"; so when some one named Tom is resurrected by the archangel's trump, it is someone immortal who is resurrected; but that is not the Tom who was buried: *that* Tom was mortal: so how can a different Tom be the same Tom, an immortal Tom the same Tom as a mortal Tom? To think this does not seem reasonable.

It appears indeed that people in sleep *do* (inexactly) see "future" happenings, i e., see happenings belonging to a farther-on point of the progress of the gram-mass struck by the dyne: for *this* is the horologe of the universe, the distance, the length, the *space* measurement, which a unit of mass once struck in eternity by a unit of force has travelled, or would have travelled, if struck. But such "future" dreams do not need speculations so quaint as "Time One", "Time Two", to explain them.

We have a hint for their explanation in the fact that the Time-Travelling in them is never *far*, never farther than the lifetime of the dreamer; and always the dreamer is in the dream. This merely means that what we call "I" is a series of millions of persons (who occupy spaces continuous with the space occupied by the first of these persons in a mother's womb). Now, each of these persons, though different by billions of changes from all the others, is still very like some of the others; if, then, one of these persons while asleep happens to be very like another of them who will be turning up to-morrow, next week, next

year, then the person asleep will almost *be* that future person, and will experience (inexactly) the circumstances which will be the environment, will be part and parcel, of that future person.

For, if "I" am eating, "I" am an eater person, eating is part and parcel of "me": and, if "I" am dancing, "I" am a dancer person; dancing is part and parcel of another "me". So the sleeper sees (exactly) the circumstances of the person who he almost is; and he had better be *asleep* to see them, for then he has no circumstances of his own (of which he is conscious) to distract his attention, so that he may now have an inexact, an "*almost*" exact, vision of the future person who, for a moment, he *almost* is—for a moment, I say, for even long dreams endure only a moment, and during the millionth of a second while one of his present selves is very like one of the future selves, he has dreamt a landscape and a story.

If the dreamer dreams of circumstances which never occurred, nor will ever occur, he is then a person whom he would have been very like, who he would "*almost*" have been, if he had not fallen asleep.

If the dreamer's dream is incoherent, mixed up, unreasonable, the person he then is, is very like *two*, or more, persons to whom different circumstances corresponded, or will correspond, and he observes the different circumstances belonging to these persons jostling in a hotch-potch.

XVI

ON PANIC

THERE is a calm of middle age when, in slippers at the fireside, we imagine that nothing could any more frighten us, and we "thank whatever gods may be for our unconquerable souls"; but, in truth, any little thing, almost, can conquer our unconquerable souls—a little wine, opium, a few 'flu microbes.

Circumstances make us different persons. I have a habit of thinking of saying, that "death has no terror for me": but, even in saying it, I know that there is a profound difference between conceiving and experiencing—between those "faint manifestations of the Unknowable" (Hume, Spencer) which consist in imagining an embrace, an air raid, and those "vivid manifestations" when we are actually embracing or being raided, when that Real Presence of Pan, father of panic and of all is in our hearts and in our pantings.

I once felt that real presence when a boy of fourteen, sitting small on a massive stallion that was stepping down a ledge, precipice above, precipice below—sedately stepping, when those same devils that entered the Gadarene hogs got into him, and

began to gallop him—down and round the curves; then there was prayer without words.

Nothing, in fact, can be quicker than a boy's panics, more delicate than his mental poise. I remember being terror-struck by some sudden text of Scripture: "He goeth after her, and knoweth not that the dead are there . . ."; and, on jumping into mid-ocean from a schooner becalmed—just to bathe—no danger—panic suddenly took me at my loneliness, at a malignancy and ghostliness in the sea.

And again on a ledge—in climbing Snowdon, more lately—a young lady who stuck and refused to go backward or forward, infected me with terror, till it occurred to me to take off my boots, and instantly I felt safe and sure.

But as to the terror of death, men die every second, some on the gallows, and they stand it very well; a generation is like a string of boards on a river being borne toward Niagara, and, since those going over go in plenty of company, this comforts. What is more dismal to me than death is the funeral: "*Magis pompa mortis quam more ipsa.*" The tolling of bells—how wild a poet's soul devised that thing! Those trembling trebles bleating, this makes an aching in the breast.

And, if the dead one was known to me, then for two, three weeks, I am haunted. Ghosts! as the good Ibsen says: "I could no more sleep than alone, without light, than fly. Yet the notion of the

persistence of personality after death" is amusing to me, for I know that neither personality nor anything persists one second—after death or before death—and only One persists; but though I smile at "ghosts" with my head, I have them in my heart. I was born in a small island, so, as a boy, had to go to funerals, and press the dead hand in farewell—one old lady who had prominent teeth I still see.

There was a belief that if the funeral moved along the seashore the sea, at some point, would smell the dead, would be drawn, would sweep up once and wet everyone's feet—which thing I once saw, and, ah! the awe of it, that haunted all the heart's hollows.

Awesome, too, to a boy's heart was when the funeral pace quickened a little (as is natural), and one mourner would mutter to another, "Ah, poor thing, ain't she eager to get home?"

"True, true," would be the answer; "she's hurrying home, she's hurrying home."

But, in my opinion, the most vivid of the "vivid manifestations of the Unknowable"—the very face and stare of Pan—are manifested in dreams. All my own short stories whose motive is terror have come out of the mood of some dream. Sometimes I see people dead—as I lately saw Napoleon—dead, yet able to move about; and I dread that they may discover me, for they look for me.

And lately I saw someone like a woman, with a veil floating about her waist; and I knew at once that she was no woman—bigger, stouter—but a being of

some other sphere; for packed within her was the vitalness of a million women, so that she was like an apparition of Life itself. Her vigour sprang out of the void like a tigress upon my eyeballs' fright, and I saw her just one instant, for in that instant, every thing in me cried out, "Oh, no, I mustn't see that!" and instantly I was awake. . . .

There may be such beings in Sirius! just the presence of whose rage and heart-beat's horse-power would be too furiously rough for us to endure.

XVII

OF THE PERSISTENCE OF PERSONALITY AFTER DEATH

ON SUCH a matter opinions are no good—even if bias was not sure to come in; and, in general, what is said should be jealously watched, to see if it is opinion, to be disregarded, or matter of fact, to be laid to heart.

Of the two notions as to how living things are made, seventy-three per cent of Europeans consider that Mind is a trait of Body, as heat is of fire; while others consider that the body is but the garment of a soul, the soul at death sloughing off the body, and thenceforth for ever carrying on by itself. This soul notion came from the Hindus, penetrated Greece, Europe, and is at present entertained by twenty-seven per cent of Europeans, as by all savages—with this difference, that Europeans at present entertain it on the strength of evidence, or of sacred scriptures, and we have psychical Research; whereas savages entertain it as a matter of course, with never a doubt, so that they even kill people, for the souls of the killed to act as attendants to a chief's soul in the soul-world, and they kill dogs, for the dogs' souls

to go hunting with him there: for not only do they believe the soul notion with (1) more depth than Europeans, but they believe it with (2) more breadth, believing that dogs, fleas, have souls that survive death, whereas Europeans usually believe that only human beings have them. Moreover, *all* Europeans formerly believed the soul notion as undoubtingly as savages do: so that, apparently, there is some tendency operating, by which, as civilisation evolves types more and more civilised, belief in the soul notion becomes (1) atrophied, and (2) narrowed. High-class evidence is presented to us that souls survive death, and communicate with the living. Henry James, for instance, relates that he received a message from his mother, dead twenty years, as to a matter about which only they could "*possibly*" have had any knowledge. Surely that is good evidence? But we have become such sceptics! We are not quite convinced—not convinced as savages are, without evidence; and, indeed, against belief in suchlike evidence is the broad fact that the temptation to pretend to special knowledge is strong in men, nor is anything easier to one so pretending than to bring in a "*possibly*" or two to emphasise one's tale; and there is the further broad fact that, if countless hosts of souls crowd the soul world, and can communicate, they must be extremely stingy of themselves, else we should all be sure of their existence, as sure as savages are.

Nor is it likely that savages are right here, and we

wrong for of late years it has come to be known by those scientifically interested in the mentality of savages that the speculations in general of savages are not only untrue, but have a certain quality of dog's-luck, by which they turn out to be the *opposite* of true. So we ought to expect that the personality of man or dog does not persist a second—after death, or before death—since savages are sure that it persists for ever.

And indeed it is easily demonstrated that personality is non-persistent—that nothing persists, save One, save Force. "All flows." This we know now, knowing what species of thing an atom is—a *system* of parts that are in motion; and (obviously) a system of moving parts is at each instant a new thing. Perhaps in the course of ages the parts of an atom, of a solar system, may get back at some instant to the same relative positions which they occupied at some instant ages before, but that would not be the same atom back again in existence: for the parts themselves (electrons, protons, neutrons, positrons) are new every instant, being waves (see the "wave-mechanics" of Schrödinger, of de Broglie), and a *wave* (constantly in motion) is constantly being another wave: so that a block of steel is non-persistent, for if each of the atoms of which the block consists is ever being another atom, the block is ever being another block. This was not known formerly, when atoms were thought to be everlasting solids (Clerk Maxwell thought so¹); it used then to be said that every seven

years people are completely new in every atom—of hair, teeth; but that is now seen to be nonsense—seven years; seven seconds is, within the millionth of a wink the universe is new. So when Tennyson's brook announced "*I go on for ever*", that was amusingly Victorian, since, obviously, a brook is at every moment another brook, having no "*I*" to go on. And All is a brook that flows, only One Being persisting.

When Mungo Park in Africa asked the natives "*Is it the same sun that comes up every morning, or is it another sun?*", he himself probably imagined that it is the same, but between Sunday and Monday a sun has changed in every atom and 100 millions of times, is millionfold different, and a different thing is another thing. The Monday sun does not even occupy the same spot in space that the Sunday sun would have occupied, if it had continued to exist, for meantime mass has been radiated at the rate of two hundred and fifty million tons a minute, so that speed has increased; the only connection between the Sunday-Monday different suns is that the spaces occupied by all of them have been continuous. But though all are dwarf G suns, the Monday sun has become more a dwarf M, has become less yellow, more red. an M sun is not the same sun as a G sun; a red thing cannot be the same thing as a yellow thing; a tomato is not a carrot. So, if someone named Mike dies, then someone dead finds himself thinking without a brain, that someone cannot be the same Mike

who used to think with a brain: the Mike who died is greatly changed, is different; and a different Mike is another Mike.

If we meet someone again after twenty years, we get the impression that some mass of calamity has befallen to transform him. Talking of one such, who had much altered, Sir Hugh Walpole once made the remark, "But he remains the same *person*"—a remark which most people doubtless regard as true. But is there any truth in it? No, it can easily be demonstrated that here Sir Hugh was not so cute a blade as he was usually. For consider what it is he said: that a *person* is a somewhat that never changes, whether the person is still lodged within a mother, or mumbles blind, toothless, a second time; so, then, a *person* must be a somewhat that has no intelligence, no desire, no eyes, no size, no body, no mind: for, if any of these is part of a person, and any of these changes, then the person changes; and a changed person is different, is another person. Now, eyes, size, do (as we know) change in persons from day to day; persons say "I have changed my mind", behave in different ways, in sleep opinions veer, nails grow, health is modified, we come nearer to being old folks, we get out of bed someone else. Persons *do* change—millions of changes every instant, and when somewhat has changed, shall we say "He is the same, he has not changed"? for, if he has changed, how can he be the same? "*Changed*" means different. A person is a living being that behaves in a certain

way, and, if we see two behaviours—hair now golden, hair now gray—a Don Juan now, a St. Anthony now—then, we see two persons, though the spaces they occupy are continuous, though both are called Tom, look alike, and have the illusion that millions are one. But in one day a person is even *visibly* fifty persons with fifty behaviours, one yearning abed for food, another turning at table from food, now drowsing, now roused to passion, come to humming, seized with sneezing, willing to dress, willing to undress, cross with a former self, bidding future selves “remember”. And, if personality is non-persistent before death, the notion that it persists after such a change is as little reasonable as it is atheist: for it says “there is no God there”; but God, evidently, is everywhere: that is, Agency, Energy, is; that is, Motion is; that is, Change is; and, if something persists somewhere, then no Change, no Motion, no energy is there.

We can see, then, even without peering three inches down into ourselves, that this *self* of ours, whose existence we are so prone to assume, is an illusion, so that always we hang the wrong man, the hand that killed having instantly ceased to exist; and nothing is, no one is, save One, Who is the same yesterday and to-day, Who moves, and is not moved.

XVIII

ON A MOOD OF THE FUTURE¹

I

WE ARE "in a state of war"—What for? Is it that we are really knight-errants of "freedom and democracy"? That was generous of us to free, after defeating, South Africa: what other country (except America?) would have made that gesture? But, then, we were in a state of reverence for the Africanders, who had nearly defeated us, we are less eager to give self-government to a less martial India; and we were hardly zealots for freedom in respect of Ireland. At this moment our friends, the French, are imprisoning certain persons for claiming to think freely, nor do we, in our zeal for freedom, send messengers to France, saying, "Free these people by 11 a.m. to-morrow, or at 11.15 Britain will be in a state of war with France." Is it even a fact that we ourselves are free? The most elementary freedom is the freedom to eat, and some—many—of us seem to be rather fettered in that way, not eating what, nor as much as, we wish. No, on the whole, it does not seem

¹ Probably composed winter 1939-40.

probable that it is for freedom that we are in a state of war. Is it, then, for democracy? But are we ourselves democrats, really? Is not our "government by the people" a government by about half the people, who vote down the other half? nor is the triumphant half ever markedly superior in quality to the defeated half, and may have voted wrongly! in which case democracy would be wrong—if that is democracy. But probably democracy is for other centuries, when the voters will be instructed critics, and will all calculate some answer to a problem. Anyway, it is hardly for democracy that we are "in a state of war".

For what, then, is it? It is for *something*: something real, radical, and no fancy. Is it not for this, that we are islanders near to a continent? In islands the flora and fauna become variations from type, as Darwin found in each of the Galapagos Islands, so that we Britons less resemble Germans than Frenchmen do, than Germans resemble Russians, Italians, islanders being touched with a kind of foreignness, oddity, "monstrosity", as the Shetland pony is, the bulldog, the "Japs", the Cos lettuce, the Fijian fauna; and since one is inclined to dislike what is unlike one, especially when what is foreign is strong and menacing, this makes island always prompt to war with continent: so that the foreign policy of our island has, for centuries, consisted of the simple recipe, "Attack all foreigners that grow strong, to keep the continent a mob of small nations": hence our

"Napoleonic War" upon a "Boney" whose foreignness we mocked, as he mocked ours, calling us a lot of shopkeepers. And the island has managed admirably, by agile diplomacy, coaxing the continent into "balances of power", dividing it against itself; but when we challengingly shout that Britons never, "*never*", shall be slaves, this loudness is to drown an inveterate instinct in our race, which whispers us that some day Sicily has to buckle under to Italy, the Isle of Man to England, England to the Continent—again as before: we English now being the sons of continentals who conquered England. For we fight against the stars in striving to keep nations little, nations being like businesses, that tend to combine into trusts, etc.; and though our right little island may triumph time after time, nothing in the end can overcome a tendency in Nature—except some other tendency; nor can forty million people eventually defeat eighty million—if they are about equal, man to man: for not only are the eighty double, but their rate of growth is double.

Suppose, though, that the forty became superior, making up in quality what they lack in quantity? Here, indeed, is the island's way out! its only way. Let it produce Martians, superiors, equipped with the tools of a high evolution; so one would be safe in betting on ten islanders against one hundred million continentals, if the ten are overmen, as when a few of us with Bren guns subdue a host of Zulus.

But how become overmen? is that practical politics

to suggest this? Well, the difference between an educated intellect and an uneducated, or a mis-educated, is undoubtedly profound, the power of education to raise humans to a higher stratum of evolution being mighty—"education" here meaning a bringing out of the energy of the intellect, a training in thinking, not a training in remembering, which dopes instead of rousing. If a child sees fit to read and spell, he will teach himself, with flying speed, in a day or two, if he is already educated, having an intellect quickened by the habit of tackling hard facts; but reading, spelling, useful as they are, are no business of the educator, whose job is to educate, not to give useful things in general, only to give two useful things—scepticism and inventiveness: which two things, I repeat, are one thing—WISDOM. A two-fold relation with truth—a shrewdness in detecting untruth, an agility in catching truth—scepticism and inventiveness—these are the fruits of education, fruits of Paradise, for all joy is in truth.

II

The trait of Mind is consciousness; and since consciousness is a perception of facts, it is only *real* facts, eternal truth, that educates consciousness, not temporary customs among men, as when we are informed that a, b spells ab, while an Arab boy is informed that a, b is ba. These, not *real* facts, do not give one to think. Which, now, is the more educated

—an English boy on learning *ab*? or an Arab boy on learning *ba*? To both the law is laid down that so the matter stands; but there is no *matter* about it, nor any law; the boys are merely being lulled to believe what they are told, to submit sleepily to the habitual, to revere what is not in the least reverend. This diseducates—except the memory, which any remembered emptiness educates: as I still remember how in the “dictation lesson” I wrote, “Along the *beach* ran a row of *beech* trees”—dull trash to present to a poor boy, who hasn’t the sense to protest that the prick of his intellect is being “let down” (as when we soften steel), and that all his lifetime he will be dulled and damped by this trumpery proffered to his young mentality: for what the teacher tells him is this, “The universe is dull trash, not a rush and a rapture clamorous with interests; what is interesting in it are the caprices of some people in spelling”: and this dull universe becomes the boy’s. This diseducates, educates *backward*, actually suggesting a lazy habit to the brain, saying “remember! don’t earn the bread of your soul in the sweat of your brow, remember about ‘beach’”: so that we, so hypnotised, when we think that we are thinking are in fact remembering something that hosts like ourselves, dead and living, have thought that they thought. Edison, Marconi, Faraday, had the luck not to know about beach, or knew with a shrug to them, to an educated boy who cannot read, the point of interest is, not whether coals come at the

moment from Newcastle, or whether Elizabeth was queen in 1558, but whether suns are millions of times bigger than earths, and whether or not it is eternal truth that rows of beeches do run along beaches.

But so to educate us islanders that, anyway, ten of us, by the law of chance, shall be definitely overmen, we shall need highly-paid scientists, teaching in costly laboratories: and where is the money to come from? Well, might we not scrap our navy, saving that money for education? Most of us would not like that: but are they not rather bizarre objects, battleships? and such a weak tin-kettles! They are made by *experts*, gentlemen who in general have a remembering habit of mentation, are not sceptics and inventors energetic with freshness of intelligence. The march of invention is from the complex to the simple; simplicity is strength, but naval construction has not followed the law, the most complex of things now being a war-ship, which accordingly is weaker than a watch—"weak" meaning liable to likely dangers. One lucky blow ends her! In the case of the *Maine*, sunk at Havana, one might fancy that the task of constructors was to turn out a thing to sink with a minimum of trouble, as when the *Camperdown*, playing about with the *Victoria*, chanced to touch her, and down she plunged. These ships are a compromise between two motifs—speed and thickness—and thickness is so antagonistic to speed, that the result is almost a nonentity or No Thing. Nothing indeed could be a *queerer* outcome, like crinolines; and the future

will doubtless look back upon them with derision. Someone may say, "Weak, yes, in defence, but potent in attack"; that, though is not so. Potent their guns indeed; but the guns do not hit!—except by chance: for *after* the shot has started, and *before* it leaves the gun, the ship has moved, and the gun has moved, and the shot's voyage is too high, or too low, or awry: hence the saying, "Ships cannot fight forts", forts being stable, as the sea-forts which I have suggested in my *The Lord of the Sea* would be. And with our ships we might scrap our R.A.F.: for, as a stone thrown at one lamp-post will probably not hit another, so it is improbable that a thing invented with one object will prove to be just suited to another object. The aeroplane is not a war-tool—is more dreaded than dreadful.

However, until the continentals invent with a fresh energy of intelligence, as when the French invented submarines, our inefficient ships and planes do manage to defend us, more or less; and, if we scrap them, we can look out to see Germans with pitched chins goose-stepping down Cheapside. For "Life is conative" (as the psychoanalysts say): "conative", aggressive; and though there is no Maginot Line at present on the Canada-America frontier, is not this because they have enormous territories not yet thronged? Seeing us defenceless Hans, for example, an amiable *bonhomme* enough, but a bully by nature, will hardly resist the temptation to be meddling with us, crowing over us, making us pay, ordering us

about in his sharp official fashion, snapping "*March!*" But will that be unbearable? They will be doing it in any case, those eight millions, in the same year that we cease to succeed in wheedling the continent into war with itself. But they will not kill us, if we do not kill them. It may be bearable.

This, indeed, is mere "pacifism", the "doctrine of non-resistance"; yes, but non-resistance with a difference: for while we are turning the other cheek we will be winking the other eye, thinking, "We bend, yes, but beware, you. our boys are at New School, becoming overboys, being taught not to read and spell, like you, but taught to mock and invent: beware!"; and when twenty of these islander overboys are nigh to manhood, they will be sending ambassadors to the continent, saying, "Please leave off being warriors, that not being a high type, and unsuited to the mood of our time. Understand that we have plans for the wellbeing of humanity, and do not mean to let you hamper them. We have been doubting and inventing, our inventings, owing to our doubting, being no more amateur, immature, but now adult; we can easily destroy you: please do quickly what we want."

This way out, indeed, will not be taken—now; perhaps, though, our right little island will have the tightness to try it some time before the opportunity passes.

NOTE ON THE TEXTS

- I *OF MYSELF* Originally entitled *About Myself* § I was written as a brochure for Victor Gollancz, and issued 1929. In the spring of 1935 it was heavily revised. § II, originally entitled *The Inconsistency of a Novelist*, was written in March 1932 for appearance in John Galsworthy's *Ten Contemporaries* (Benn, June 1932). In the spring of 1935, it was lightly revised. § III was written in the spring of 1935. The complete essay in its present form first appeared in A. Reynolds Morse's *The Works of M. P. Shiel: a Study in Bibliography* (Los Angeles, December 1948).
- II *ON READING*; and III *OF WRITING* This essay, here divided, was probably written in 1909 and first published as a Dedicatory Preface to *Thus Knot of Life* (Everett & Co., November 1909). In the spring of 1935 it was heavily revised.
- IV *ON SCHOLAR-ARTISTRY*. Originally entitled *Arthur Machen*, this essay was written probably in Chiswick in 1924 for *The Borzoi* 1925. *Being a Sort of Record of Ten Years of Publishing*, (Alfred Knopf, New York, 1925).
- V *OF WRITING AND SCIENCE* Originally entitled *Writing and Science*, this essay was written at "L'Abri", circa 1930-1934. In the spring of 1935 it was lightly revised.

- VI *ON HAPPY ENDINGS* This essay was probably written at "L'Abri", circa 1930-1934. In the spring of 1935 it was lightly revised.
- VII *OF HOW TO BE HAPPY* Originally entitled *How to be Happy*, this essay was written at Wisboro Green, circa 1925-1929. In the spring of 1933 the original draft manuscript was offered for sale in *The Personal Library of John Gausworth* (Catalogue No. 25, Item 473, Bertram Rota, 76a Davies Street, W 1), and was bought back by the recipient. In September 1933 the original draft of § 1 was published in *The Plain Dealer*, (Vol. 1, No. 1). In the spring of 1935 the entire essay was considerably revised.
- VIII *ON WEALTH* This essay was probably written at "L'Abri", circa 1930-1934. In the spring of 1935 it was lightly revised.
- IX *OF THE NECESSITY OF WAR* Originally entitled *Is War Necessary?* The first draft of this essay was almost certainly written in London between 1915 and 1925. In the spring of 1935 it was lightly revised and extended.
- X. *ON THE CAUSE OF WAR*. Originally entitled *The Cause of War*, this essay was written at "L'Abri", circa 1930-1934. In the spring of 1935 it was lightly revised.
- XI. *OF RELIGION AND IRRELIGION* Originally entitled *Are We Going Pagan?* this essay was written at "L'Abri", circa 1930-1934. In the spring of 1935 it was lightly revised.
- XII. *ON TOLERANCE* This essay was probably written at "L'Abri", circa 1930-1934. In May 1935 it was lightly revised.

- XIII *OF VENGEANCE* This essay was probably written at "L'Abri" in 1935. It is here published from the manuscript.
- XIV. *ON ETERNAL AND TEMPORAL* This essay was probably written at "L'Abri", circa 1930-1934. In the spring of 1935 it was lightly revised.
- XV *OF TIME-TRAVELLING* Originally entitled *Time-Travelling*, this essay was written at "L'Abri" in 1938 and appeared first in *Tomorrow* (Vol. 2, No. 3, Autumn 1938), and then, slightly abridged, in *The English Digest* (Vol. II, No. 2, December 1939).
- XVI *ON PANIC* Originally entitled *Things That Frighten Me*, this essay was probably written at Wisboro Green. It was published in *The Daily Chronicle*, April 18th, 1929.
- XVII *OF THE PERSISTENCE OF PERSONALITY AFTER DEATH* Originally entitled *The Persistence of Personality after Death*, this essay was written at "L'Abri", circa 1936-1940, and appeared in *Enquiry* (Vol. II, No. 2, August 1949).
- XVIII *ON A MOOD OF THE FUTURE*. Originally entitled *Our Way Out*, this essay was written at "L'Abri", probably in the winter of 1939-1940.

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